

LUCKY JIM GETS TO NUMBER 1
The EMI boss who is breaking all records with a £12m pay-off

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THE EYE

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The Independent's man who today sets off to climb Everest

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THE INDEPENDENT

Monday 23 March 1998 45p (IR50p) No 3,565

16 cathedrals invest in arms firms

Exclusive

By Ian Burrell

MONEY given by church and cathedral congregations in donations and bequests is being invested in companies making tanks, missiles and fighter aircraft.

A dossier released to *The Independent* reveals that 16 cathedrals are listed as holding shares worth nearly £30m in British defence companies including British Aerospace, Vickers and Racal.

The Central London Mosque holds shares worth £53,000 in GEC,

one of the major suppliers of weapons parts to British forces aligned against Iraq in the Gulf. The Muslim world was virtually united in its opposition to the military action.

Last night, the Bishop of Monmouth, the Rt Rev Rawan Williams, said: "It's very clear to me that it is not satisfactory to be investing in companies whose primary task is the production of military hardware. I don't think the defence industry is simply to do with protecting ourselves."

Paul Flynn, the Labour MP, said he would be tabling a parliamentary question to demand an end to the investments. He said: "Those who pi-

ously contribute to the church roof fund would be alarmed to find that they are contributing to some of the murderous megalomaniacs who receive arms from the British defence industry."

At Salisbury Cathedral, the Choristers' Endowment Fund holds shares worth £307,000 in BAe – Britain's biggest arms company, and producer of Hawk fighter aircraft.

Brigadier Kit Owen, the cathedral's chapter clerk, said the investment in BAe was now under review. "We

are grateful for having our attention drawn to this and are immediately reviewing the situation."

Of the 15 Anglican cathedrals

which have shares registered in their name, or in that of their diocesan board of finance, the biggest players are Oxford – which is managed by the University and has shares worth £12m in GEC and GKN – and Lichfield, which holds shares worth £359,000 in Vickers, the firm which produces Challenger tanks.

A spokesman for the diocese of Lichfield said the shares had been a bequest from a churchgoer and it had not been thought appropriate to sell them on.

The other Anglican cathedrals with registered shareholdings in defence companies are Liverpool, St Albans, Leicester, Birmingham,

Newcastle, Rochester and Southwark, London, Derby, Blackburn, Carlisle, Manchester and Chester.

But their stakes are dwarfed by the only Roman Catholic cathedral to invest in the defence industry, Birmingham, which has shares in Lucas Varity and Rolls Royce worth £25m.

Many of the cathedrals said last week that they were following the lead of the Church Commissioners, who manage the wealth of the Church of England and have an enormous investment portfolio,

which includes 4 million shares in GEC and 800,000 in GKN. Aaron Kataria, of the Church Commis-

sioners, said: "Our concern is that the company is not wholly or mainly in [the defence] business. The companies that we invest in are broad and diverse manufacturing companies."

Steve Jenkins, spokesman for the General Synod, said arms spending could be ethically justified. "A mistake that people make is to assume that as a church you must be opposed to arms manufacture. There is a theology of a just war. There is nothing in the Bible that says you cannot defend yourself."

But Rachel Harford, joint co-ordinator of the Campaign against the Arms Trade, which compiled the dossier from the published records

of British defence companies, said: "Arms-exporting companies are indiscriminate in the sale of their weapons. They are arming repressive regimes like Indonesia and Turkey and fuelling conflicts in the Far and Middle East. Should the church really be involved in this trade?"

A spokesman for the Central Mosque said its investment in GEC would be reviewed. "GEC used to make fridges in the old days," he said. "You have to be very careful about investment, especially in a non-Muslim country like Britain. You have to make sure that those companies do not get involved in forbidden products."

Tuition fees 'will deter poorer students'

Exclusive

By Judith Judd

Education Editor

NEARLY three-quarters of potential students claim they might be put off going to university by the Government's decision to introduce tuition fees. The poorest students are the most likely to decide against continuing into higher education.

A survey of more than 500 16- to 18-year-olds and 500 parents carried out for *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* also shows that many parents are likely to encourage their children to go to the university nearest their home because of fees.

Twenty-seven per cent of the students said the £1,000-a-year fees, to be introduced from September, and the abolition of maintenance grants would greatly affect the likelihood of their going to university. For those in the lowest social classes the figures rose to 34 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

Nearly a third of parents said the decision about whether to encourage their children to go to university would be greatly affected while 22 per cent said the fees would affect them slightly.

The poorest parents were more likely than their middle-class counterparts to say that they would discourage their children from going to university.

Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, pointed out that applications for university were down by only 2.7 per cent.

"I would prefer to deal in hard evidence rather than opinions expressed by potential students. The facts at the moment are that there has been virtually no fall in applications. Our initial work shows that there has been no change in the profile of applications by social class."

The big issue still is whether applications will translate into students. These students are talking about not necessarily going on to university. That doesn't necessarily mean they won't apply. There seems to be considerable anecdotal evidence that potential students have not yet read all the guidance sent out by UCAS and the vice-chancellors' committee."

Details of the survey will be published in a special supplement on Thursday, 2 April when *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* are organising a conference on tuition fees.

Troops stand guard on road to sainthood



Holy orders: Nigerian troops yesterday watching crowds who gathered for a papal mass in Onitsha. The Pope performed the beatification of Father Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi – a former priest and monk, portrayed in the poster. Fr Tansi could become the first Nigerian saint. Photograph: Jean-Marc Bouju/AP

'Close friend' lands Diana biography deal

By Dorothy Parks

RICHARD KAY, the journalist closer than any to Diana, Princess of Wales, has finalised a deal to write her biography.

Kay's unparalleled access to the Princess is sure to ensure that *Diana: The Untold Story*, tops the best-seller lists when it is published on 10 July.

It is understood that while the book will repeat some of the stories previously published in

the *Daily Mail*, for which Kay is royal correspondent, it also aims to correct "many false and destructive impressions".

It will paint a picture of a woman very different from the sad, blemished depicted in other books, such as Andrew Morton's.

Of all Fleet Street's royal correspondents, Kay was particularly close to the Princess whom he considered a friend as well as a contact. He was once

photographed meeting Diana in a car at the same time she had been complaining about the attentions of the Press.

After the Princess's death, Kay revealed that he had spoken to Diana on the phone from Paris just six hours before the fatal car crash. He attended her funeral though he declined to write about the service, something remarked on by the judges of the What the Papers Say Awards, who earlier this month

named Kay as Royal Reporter of the Year.

The biography, for which Kay is receiving an advance of £50,000, is being published by Boxtree, part of the Macmillan Group. They are billing the book as "her story in her own words" and they describe Kay as "Diana's closest journalist friend and confidante".

World-wide sales of the book are likely to make Kay very rich, though it is not known

whether he will donate any of the proceeds to the memorial fund set up in her memory.

Last night Kay was in New York at an auction in aid of the Princess of Wales memorial fund.

A friend said: "Richard has not rushed into this. He has thought long and hard before accepting one of numerous offers put to him, and then only after strict guarantees and extensive negotiations."

Today's news

Hospital closures

HIGH-security mental hospitals housing Britain's most dangerous mental patients and prisoners could be closed under secret plans being considered by ministers. Page 2

Pioneer farmers

FARMERS attracted by lure of low prices and high yields are quitting Britain to seek pastures new in Eastern Europe. Page 5

Brown bids to slash housing benefit costs

By Anthony Bevins

Political Editor

GORDON Brown is bouncing ministers into taking early action on housing benefit, using this week's Green Paper on welfare reform as the trigger for an early decision.

References to housing benefit in Thursday's welfare reform paper will be "few and far between", *The Independent* was told yesterday. The paper does not even begin to tackle the principles of changing the system of rent and mortgage interest benefit, now costing the taxpayer £12bn a year.

But the Chancellor of the Exchequer is set to drive through his own strategic action plan on welfare. "We want opportunity for all those who have been denied it, and secu-

rity for all those who need it," Mr Brown said yesterday, providing new Labour's version of Karl Marx's, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

The Green Paper will set out the principles of reform, but Mr Brown sees himself as the man to put flesh – the practical policy – on the bones. On the future up-rating of state pensions, nothing can be done until a review has been completed next June. Then, in July, Whitehall's comprehensive spending review is expected to report – along with a review of housing policy, led by John Prescott's Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

That will provide Mr Brown with an opportunity to strike on housing benefit, and he has now

Turn to page 2

5 facts about the oscars

- 1 *Richard Attenborough* is the only person to have won an Academy Award for directing, producing and writing a film.
- 2 The average age of voting Academy members is 60 years.
- 3 You could make "the full monty" fifty-seven times for the price of one "titanic".
- 4 Four of the five nominees for this year's best actress award are british.
- 5 *Lauren Bacall* once said that if ever nominated for an Oscar, she would "die in a tub" at the ceremony.

weeknights at
7pm on ⑤

Newcastle chairman is set to resign

By Ian Burrell

SPECULATION was mounting last night that Freddy Shepherd, the chairman of Newcastle United, is preparing to resign following newspaper reports that he insulted fans, players and the women of the North-east.

Mr Shepherd flew to Barbados on Concorde with his wife Lorelle and is not due back for at least a week.

Last night his solicitor Michael Winskill would not confirm that Mr Shepherd intended to stay at the club.

It is understood that information regarding Mr Shepherd's position in the club was

being provided to the Stock Exchange and a statement could come as early as this morning.

The club's vice-chairman Douglas Hall, who is also accused of making the disparaging comments, has indicated through his solicitor that he has no intention of resigning. Mr Hall holds 57 per cent of the club's shares, while Mr Shepherd has 7 per cent stake.

Three of the Newcastle holding company's non-executive directors will meet today to consider whether to resign in protest if the pair do not bow to the demand from supporters that they step down.

Sir Terence Harrison, the

chairman of Alfred McAlpine, John Mayo, the former finance director of GEC, and Denis Cassidy, former boss of Boddington's brewery, are concerned that the scandal may affect their own reputations.

Sir Terence said yesterday from his home in Whalton, Northumberland: "It's not an emergency meeting, but to discuss the interim business results which will be released on Tuesday. We will also be discussing the present state of affairs at Newcastle United. There will be a press release on Tuesday morning including a statement about the management."

Sir Terence Harrison, the

stands further pressure for resignations will come from minority shareholders who are considering an action under the Companies Act to protect against possible damage to the company's share price.

The scandal began last week when the *News of the World* published details of conversations between Mr Hall, Mr Shepherd and an undercover reporter, claiming to be a businessman.

Yesterday the paper published further derogatory remarks made by the directors about Tony Banks, the sports minister. Mr Banks responded in kind: "They should go as fast as they can. They are a disgrace."

TOMORROW

■ Tessa Jowell:
Why I'm worried
about men – an
exclusive
interview with
the health
minister
HEALTH

■ Gordon
Ramsey: The
deep-sea dive
that almost
ended in death
for Aubergine's
Michelin-starred
chef
REVELATIONS



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Recycled paper made up
41.4% of the raw material for
UK newspapers in the
first half of 1997.

'Ripper' hospital faces closure

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

HIGH-SECURITY mental hospitals housing Britain's most dangerous patients could be closed under secret plans being considered by ministers.

The report, by the High Security Psychiatric Services Commissioning Board which was leaked to BBC1's *Panorama*, suggests that the hospitals – Broadmoor, Rampton and Ashworth could be replaced by six to eight regional high security units around the country.

Special hospitals, which house patients such as the Moors murderer, Ian Brady, and the Yorkshire Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe, have come under scrutiny recently. Last year an inquiry was launched into Ashworth after allegations of pornography, paedophilia and drug abuse in the Personality Disorder Unit. A new management structure is now in place at the hospital.

The report, seen by *The Independent*, says that as many as half the patients presently housed do not need to be in a high-security units but are not able to move on because of the lack of suitable alternatives.

At present, there are 1,520 patients in the special hospitals but the board estimates that the true need is between 850 and 1,000, with other patients suitable for medium secure units or other accommodation.

"The excessive restriction of so many patients is the greatest single shortcoming of the present arrangements and putting it right must be the forensic services' first priority whilst maintaining the safety of the public," it says.

At present, the special hospitals are directly answerable to the Secretary of State for Health, but the board suggests that they should be managed in future by NHS trusts.

Noting that the changes could prove controversial, the report adds: "The wider public also have a legitimate interest in these services, and it is important to ensure their concerns about safety and other matters are fully addressed including their confidence in the changes proposed."

The Department of Health confirmed yesterday that a review of special hospitals had been finished and ministers were considering recommendations although no decisions had yet been reached.

Panorama: Out of Sight, Out of Mind is on BBC1 at 10pm tonight.

Full integration of high-security services with other mental health services in the NHS requires a "clear commitment to end the present concentration of the services," it concludes, otherwise they will remain "geographically and professionally isolated".

The report also stresses that alternative services for women, who presently make up 200 of the patients in an "urgent priority" and suggests that a single unit serving the whole country is the best option. A single site for patients with learning disabilities should also be set up.

High-security facilities and medium-secure units currently cost £268m per year. The report estimates that to break the hospitals down into smaller units would cost between £14m and £30m more.

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Season of tension: Royal Ulster Constabulary officers keeping loyalists and nationalists apart as Catholic residents of the Garvagh Road in Portadown, Co Armagh, held a protest march against Orange Order parades. Photograph: Paul McErlane

Ulster talks enter final stage

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

THE Northern Ireland talks process enters a crucial final stage today, with the Government insisting that any agreement among the parties must emerge before Easter.

This means that London, Dublin and the eight of the 10 Ulster parties which attend the talks expect an intensive three-week burst of negotiation. This may finally reveal whether agreement is possible among elements as diverse as Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionists.

Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, and his Irish counterpart, Bertie Ahern, are expected to become involved at some stage, with both governments making concentrated efforts to identify common ground.

Most of those involved seemed to say privately yesterday that agreement is possible but not probable, given the strains which exist within all the major elements, in particular Unionism and republicanism. The most difficult area is generally agreed to be that of the proposed new north-south body linking Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Unionists want as modest a body as possible, and want it to be firmly under the control of a new Belfast assembly. Nationalists, by contrast, want a

body which will be powerful, capable of evolving, and which will be able to withstand any efforts of a Belfast assembly to limit its role.

Aside from the broad constitutional issues, other problematic areas include the question of policing and the release of paramilitary prisoners in the event of a settlement.

The weekend brought several reminders that problems will not be confined to the talks building. A large bomb, discovered in the Irish Republic on Saturday night, is assumed to have been the work of the breakaway republican Continuity Army Council. It was apparently intentioned on destabilising the talks with a

major attack on one of Ulster's towns or cities. The device, containing 1,300lb of home-made explosives, was found in a shed north of Dundalk.

In Belfast, meanwhile, police fired plastic bullets during rioting in north Belfast. Up to 30 petrol bombs were thrown by loyalists during the clashes, which police said took place after officers tried to stop about 50 loyalists heading into a nationalist area.

The Ulster Unionist Party leader, David Trimble, said:

"We are serious, we are realistic, we are going to see if success can be achieved; we are going to work hard for it; but it is not guaranteed."

Brown's reforms

Continued from page 1
started to soften up colleagues for action, in time for next year's Budget.

It is expected that one of the few references to housing benefit in Thursday's Green Paper will be on fraud and abuse, an issue of long-standing concern for Frank Field, the minister for welfare reform, who has been working on the policy document.

Mr Brown said yesterday that "abuse and fraud in benefits, particularly in housing benefit", would be a target of the paper. Overall, fraud and abuse is estimated at £4bn out of a total benefits bill of £100bn, and between £1bn and £2bn could be accounted for by housing benefit.

But the central issue of reform is fraught with enormous difficulties – and people would be bound to lose out. Loyalists, often the most vulnerable people in society, tend to create unexpected political waves and backlash. The elderly, lone parents, and the long-term sick and disabled account for three-quarters of all recipients of the benefit.

But Mr Brown showed in last week's Budget that he was not afraid of grasping nettles – as with the working families tax credit. It could be possible, over time, to incorporate housing benefit and council-tax benefit into the tax-credit system, now due to take effect in April 2000.

Outlining his own master plan for welfare reform, Mr Brown made it clear yesterday that the Green Paper would offer security for all those in need, such as the disabled.

"I have always seen welfare reform in three stages," he told BBC1's *On the Record* programme, "and the first stage was to get those people who are able to work back to work and provide opportunity to do so."

"The second thing, which is what we've done in our Budget, is to make work pay. There's no point transferring people from poverty out of work to poverty in work, and we have made a big difference to that and of course the minimum wage and raising child benefit is part of that as well."

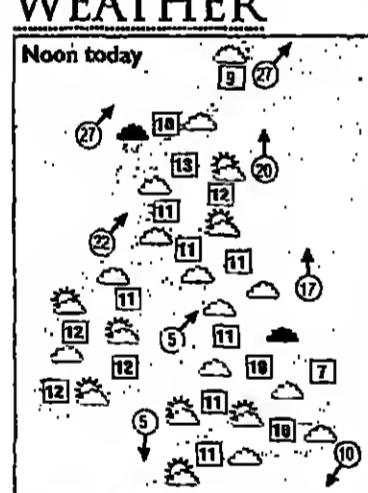
"Now, the third part of the welfare reform strategy is to help those ... if they are incapable of working."

and atmosphere comes into sharpest focus along coasts," he writes, and with two-thirds of the world's population living in coastal regions, this assumes even greater importance. "There is, in addition, a major challenge and opportunity facing WMO ... as we seek to harness the linkages between oceans and climate to provide accurate forecasts of droughts and other severe climatic conditions on seasonal to annual timescales. We must also strive to refine our understanding of the role of the oceans in time to contribute substantially to preventing, or mitigating the most adverse impacts of global warming."

But what should we do to mark World Meteorological Day? I have three suggestions: 1) take your umbrella for a walk; 2) stare out of the window and wonder at the laws of physics that produce such beautiful colours in the sky; 3) just sit and think about El Nino and all the other things we don't understand about the massive and so far totally unpredictable effects the oceans have on the world's weather.

In his World Meteorological Day message, Professor Godwin Obasi, the Secretary-General of WMO, stresses the importance of increasing our understanding of the link between oceans and weather. "The interaction of land, sea

WEATHER



British Isles weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

Cloudless: Clearer; Partly cloudy: Moderate Rain;

Scattered showers: Sparse; Showers: Moderate;

Heavy rain: Intense; Hail: Hail;

Aberdeen C 8 46 Fife 11 52 Inverness C 9 48

Ayr C 9 48 Ipswich C 9 48

Belfast C 9 48 Isles of Scilly C 10 50

Birmingham C 7 45 Jersey C 10 50

Blackpool S 9 48 Liverpool F 10 50

Bournemouth C 10 50 London C 10 50

Brighton F 11 52 Manchester S 12 54

Bristol C 9 48 Newcastle S 10 50

Cardiff C 9 48 Oxford C 7 45

Carlisle S 10 50 Plymouth C 9 48

Chester C 8 46 Scarborough S 11 52

Glasgow C 9 48 Southampton C 11 52

Edinburgh C 10 50 Stevenage C 9 48

Exeter C 10 50 Stoke-on-Trent C 9 48

Glasgow C 8 46

London S 11 52

Air quality

Yesterday's readings

London Good

S England Good

Wales Good

C England Good

N Scotland Good

N Ireland Good

Outlook for today

London Good

S England Good

Wales Good

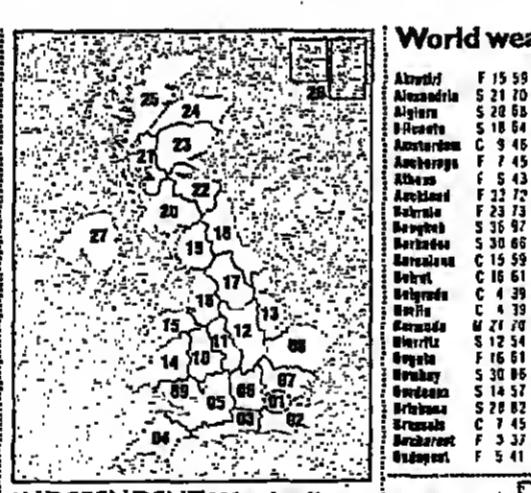
C England Good

N Scotland Good

N Ireland Good

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High tides AM HT PM HT

London 08.41 5.7 21.15 5.7

09.28 7.4 19.11 7.4

09.41 8.8 14.30 10.0

10.18 7.0 13.55 7.0

07.44 2.6 20.12 2.7

Dun Laoghaire 10.14 3.3 20.04 3.5

Height measured in metres

Lighting-up times Sun moon

Captions tell you how far it will

move north-east on 21 March. Low F will move

south-west. High F will decline west.

New Moon: March 26

Full Moon: April 21

Supermoon: April 25

3rd Quarter: May 12

4th Quarter: June 1

High F will decline east.

Low F will move west.

High F will decline west.

Low F will move east.

High F will decline west.

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High F will decline west.

Low F will move east.

High F



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This middle-aged, average climber is taking on Everest. Is it the height of madness?

A month ago it seemed laughable. But today *The Independent's* Stephen Goodwin explains his feelings setting out to scale the mother of mountains

TODAY I set off to climb Mount Everest. A month ago, the idea would have seemed laughable. Mr Average Climber does not go to Everest, or at least not beyond the trek to Base Camp.

Yet here I am with the air ticket to Kathmandu, surrounded by the specialised equipment needed to climb and survive above 8,000 metres.

Among much else, a sleeping bag "comfortable to around minus 35 degrees centigrade" according to its manufacturer Rab Carrington, a goose down suit, a £320 pair of boots said to be my best guarantee against frost bite and a wide-necked pee bottle to save leaving the haven of the tent. I must remember to mark it a vividly different colour from the otherwise identical drinking bottle.

Assembling the gear, however, is the pain free bit. Everest has its darker side. A ferocious storm high on the mountain in May 1996 killed eight climbers and left others horribly maimed by frostbite. Everest was big box office again. *Into Thin Air*, the gripping first-hand account by American Jon Krakauer became a mountaineering best-seller. The giant-screen Imax format film *Everest*, shot in the same fateful season, is enjoying success in London.

This spring, in the weather window before the jet stream changes direction to plaster Everest with monsoon snow, at least seven teams will attempt the 8,848m summit. I will be one of seven clients with Himalayan Kingdom Expeditions (HKE), who 10 years ago introduced the concept of providing guides for high-altitude peaks to the UK market. *The Independent* will be publishing a regular diary, reporting on the team's progress, the physical and emotional strains of climbing into the "Death Zone" above 8,000m where lack of oxygen means the body is literally dying, the Base Camp international circus and the Sherpas who have found fame, a modest in-

come, and too often death on the mountain they call Chomolungma.

My paying companions include a New York physicist, two stockbrokers, a British Army doctor, a Ford dealer from Alberta and an Irish nurse - a mixed bunch united by an obsession I do not share. Until four weeks ago, I, like most climbers steeped in the tenets of the sport, could recite the staging points on the walk-in - Namche Bazaar, Thyangboche monastery, Gorak Shep - and the camps up the Western Cwm and Lhotse Face to the South Col, but had no more expectation of going there than flying to the moon.

Martin "Bazzy" Barnicott, one of HKE's guides this spring, was a summiteer in 1993 and the team is led by Dave Walsh who made the first British ascents of Cho Oyu and Nanga Parbat both over 8,000m. I could hardly be in more experienced company. Yet apprehension is natural - more so perhaps for the family I will leave for 10 weeks than myself. Packing at the weekend, I glanced up to find Lucie, my wife, looking hard at me. "I want to while I can," she said.

The figures are sobering - more than 700 people have reached the 8,848m summit but 153 have died in the attempt or while descending.

Having climbed no higher than Mont Blanc, at 4,807m not even as high as Everest Base Camp, it is presumptuous to think I can make the summit.

Who knows how a middle-aged hiker's body copes with high altitudes. To put places to those names in mountaineering literature will be enough and I will go no further than I feel able, I tell those dear to me.

Yet I cannot share my colleague Charles Arthur's description of May on Everest as the "killing season". My own approach to the sport we share is less apocalyptic. I take my philosophical cue from Pip and Joe Gargery in *Great Expectations*: "What larks." We shall see.

Three of the clients, each paying around £25,000, have been high on Everest before; American Lily Leonard, 41, to within 200m of the summit. First-timer Josie Keiran, 44, a nurse from County Louth could be the first Irish woman to the top of the world.

On Himalayan Kingdom's last expedition via the popular South Col route in 1993 there were 16 summiteers - seven clients, seven Sherpas and two guides. But after the horrors of 1996, when HKE were relieved to be on the opposite side of the mountain, there was a strong whiff of "we told you so" from the purists who abhor commercialism. A traffic jam had built up at the Hillary Step, 20m of steep rock and ice to be surmounted before the final gasping plod to

the summit, causing fatal delays as the storm approached.

With Nepal unlikely to impose controls that would hit its income, the leading outfitts including HKE, have formed International Guiding Operators 8000 with the aim of setting professional standards and a code of conduct. Punters should be able to steer clear of cowboys who, in pursuit of personal summit bids, have been known to virtually abandon clients. However it will not deal with the problem of inexperienced or selfish national teams going for glory while imperilling others. Over-crowding is still a risk.

Stephen Goodwin is writing a column for *The Independent* on mountaineering.



Everest: While 700 have reached the top, 150 have died going down

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With Nepal unlikely to impose controls that would hit its income, the leading outfitts including HKE, have formed International Guiding Operators 8000 with the aim of setting professional standards and a code of conduct. Punters should be able to steer clear of cowboys who, in pursuit of personal summit bids, have been known to virtually abandon clients. However it will not deal with the problem of inexperienced or selfish national teams going for glory while imperilling others. Over-crowding is still a risk.

Stephen Goodwin is writing a column for *The Independent* on mountaineering.



Into gear: Stephen Goodwin at home yesterday getting ready to leave for Nepal. Photograph: Rui Xavier

Academy that excels in extravagance

IN THE NEWS

THE OSCARS



A giant Oscar being manoeuvred into place for tonight's ceremony. Photograph: Reuters

IN 1929, scriptwriter Frances Marion summed up the Oscars: "The statuette is a perfect symbol of the picture business - a powerful athletic body clutching a gleaming sword, with half of his head, the part that holds his brains, completely sliced off."

For many that still holds true today. Amid the frenzied attempts by the fashion designers to persuade stars to wear their creations and the competition for the best post-Oscar party, the films seem to play only a supporting role in the event itself, writes Kate Watson-Smyth.

Nevertheless, the Oscars are big business. ABC Television, which pays the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences £1.2m for the rights to broadcast the ceremony, charges up to £25,000 for a 30-second advertising spot and has been known to complain if the nominees are not suffi-

ciently high profile. And with a worldwide audience of 1 billion, the annual gathering of the world's most glamorous celebrities has become the greatest opportunity for global publicity for fashion designers.

It is a far cry from the early days when nominees had to sit at home waiting for the phone to ring. If they won, they were summoned and had to race off to the ceremony.

The first awards were hand-

ed out by the Academy at a dinner in May 1929 but the ceremony did not become known as the Oscars until 1935 when an academy librarian, Margaret Herrick, said the statuette looked like her uncle Oscar.

The name stuck and Oscar became the ultimate symbol of success Hollywood-style. It was first shown on television in 1952 and gradually transformed into the glitzy occasion that it is today.

But the Academy is not

without its critics. Many have complained that it panders to the sentimental and the politically correct, typified when Tom Hanks won Best Actor awards in 1993 and 1994 for *Philadelphia* and *Forrest Gump*. This year, there are a record number of British entrants with four out of the five nominations for Best Actress going to Britain, but the hot favourite is the American Helen Hunt for her performance in *As Good As It Gets*.

It is estimated that winning "Best Picture" adds about £33m to a film's box-office takings and the Academy must remember that when making its decisions. But of the 5,000 members who pay £90 a year to belong, only about half bother to vote.

Tonight's ceremony will almost certainly include its share of tears, embarrassing speeches and surprises. As Johnny Carson once said: "Two hours of sparkling entertainment spread out over a four-hour show."

AND THE WINNING DRESS IS ...

Designers will go to almost any length to persuade the stars to wear their dresses, but there is no guarantee that their outfit will actually be worn. Two years ago, both Valentino and New York-based Vera Wang thought Sharon Stone had "agreed" to wear one of their gowns.

In the end, Stone concocted her own ensemble - a £15 grey rayon turtleneck top from Gap with a floor-length black velvet coat.

OSCAR'S VITAL STATISTICS

The statuettes are 13-and-a-half inches tall, weigh eight-and-a-half pounds and are made of an alloy plated with copper, nickel, silver and 24-carat gold. They cost the Academy around £100 each to make. During the Second World War a more modest gold-plated plaster version was substituted.

NO-SHOW BUSINESS

Despite the hype, there are some who remain completely unimpressed by the Oscars. Woody Allen has yet to turn up, despite being nominated a dozen times. In 1961 George C Scott asked for his nomination for *The Hustler* to be withdrawn because he thought the Oscars were "bull". The Academy refused and nine years later Scott refused to pick up his award for Best Actor in *Potter*.

BEST OF THE BEST

Katherine Hepburn has won the highest number of awards with four for Best Actress. Laurence Olivier and Jack Nicholson are the most nominated actors with 10 apiece. Olivier won only once and Nicholson has so far won twice - he is nominated again this year.

CAT AND MOUSE

If you count Tom and Jerry as actors they hold the record for winning the greatest number of Oscars, with eight of their cartoons winning awards.

'Paedophile' row threatens book prize

Exclusive

By Louise Jury

THE "LONG-LIST" of authors in the running for the £30,000 Orange Prize for women's fiction is set to spark a new round of controversy when it is unveiled today.

The End of Alice, by American novelist AM Homes, which produced howls of protest when published, is understood to have been one of the books considered by the five-woman panel. It is about paedophilia as seen through the eyes of a jailed child murderer.

Connoisseurs of the literary row will also be looking to see whether the trenchant criticisms of English novelists by last year's chair, Professor Lisa Jardine, have had any effect on nominations.

She accused many English authors of being "smug and parochial," writing "narrow-minded" books with little appeal for the world market. Among those she named were Martin Amis, Graham Swift and Julian Barnes.

The Orange Prize shortlist last year contained no English-born writers, but featured two Canadians, two Americans, a Scot and an author from Northern Ireland. The winner was the Canadian Anne Michaels whose work, *Fugitive Pieces*, was virtually unheard of at the time. This year's long-list of 20, from which the final shortlist of six will be chosen, is expected to widespread disappointment, and *The Essence of the Thing* by the Australian Madeleine St John, which did make it onto the Booker shortlist, are also likely to reflect in names like Rachel Cusk.

Rose Tremain's *The Way I Found Her*, which was left off the Booker shortlist to widespread disappointment, and *The Essence of the Thing* by the Australian Madeleine St John, which did make it onto the Booker shortlist, are also likely to reflect in names like Nadine Gordimer's *The House Guest*, the latest of her stories of life in the new South Africa.

Sue Townsend, best known for *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*, could stand a chance of literary recognition for her recent adult novel, *Ghost Children*.

But a spokeswoman for the competition stressed that it prided itself on looking out for unknown writers. Unlike many other prizes, publishers are asked to submit five titles for consideration in addition to the three books they nominate.

Announcing last year's long-list, which the broadcaster, and includes the novelist Bernice Rubens.

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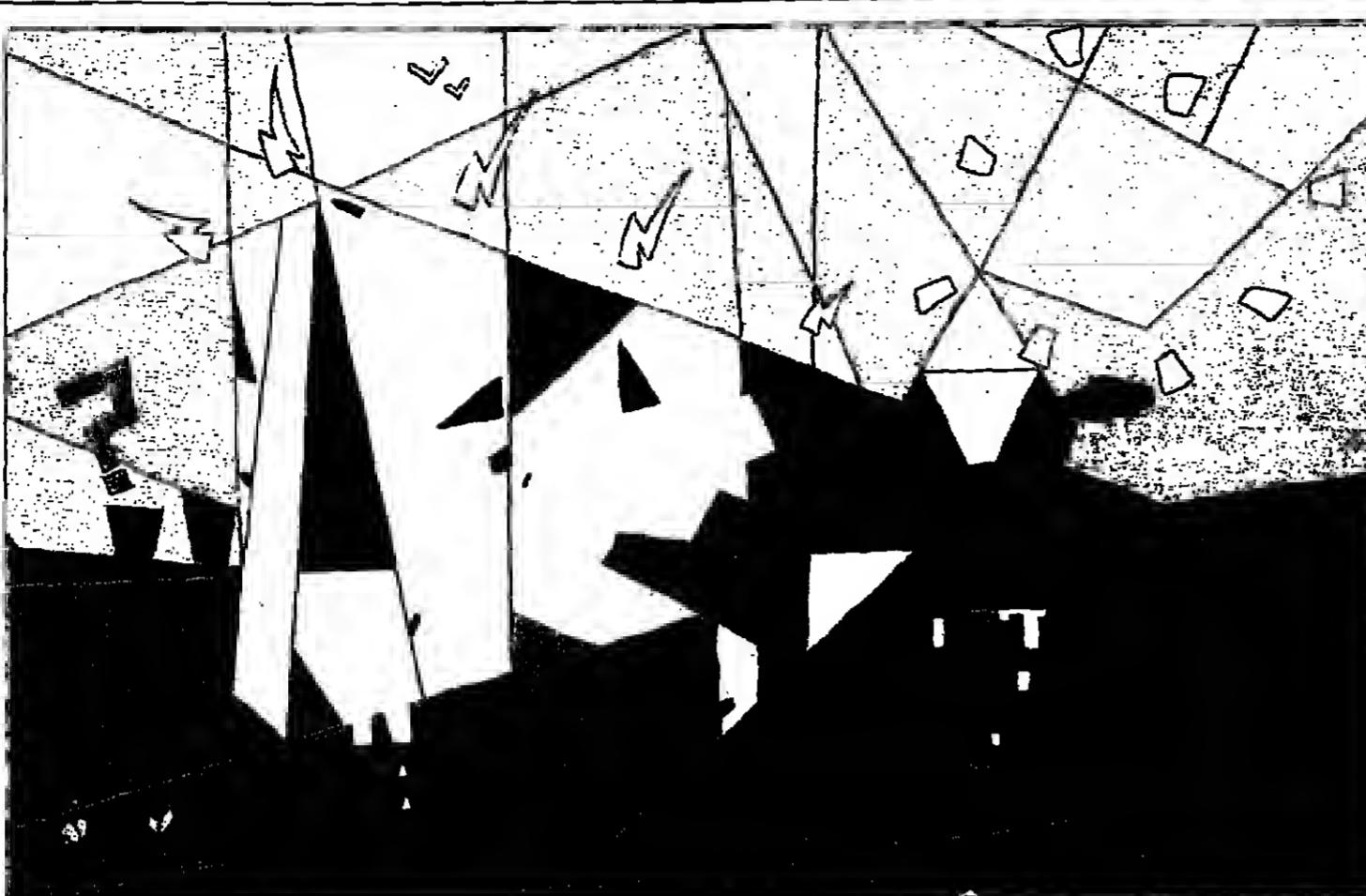
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Artists in Pink period

The rock band Pink Floyd will reach another stage of immortality when an exhibition of paintings inspired by their music opens in London today. Eight albums have provided the ideas for acrylic paintings by the artist Steve Garry and they include Atom Heart Mother (right, Garry's version and, top, the album cover), Dark Side Of The Moon and Wish You Were Here. 'Varying Shades of Pink' can be seen at the Air Gallery in Dover Street, Mayfair.



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Clean-car zones to outlaw old vehicles

By Randeep Ramesh

DRIVERS of old bangers that belch fumes could be barred from entering parts of town centres under radical plans being proposed by the Government.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, is planning to create "clean-car zones" in Britain's cities in order to meet the Government's tough air quality targets by 2005.

The move will hit drivers of polluting cars, vans and lorries - mainly older or badly-maintained vehicles. Mr. Prescott will launch the initiative at an "informal" meeting of European ministers next month in Chester.

Motorists will face mixture of sticks and carrots. Governments want garages in the clean-car zones to offer free emissions tests for drivers. Motorists who meet the pollution standards would also require a permit to drive in town centres - and would face on-the-spot fines if they failed to display them.

Civil servants argue that unless action is taken soon, it will be too late to curb rising pollution levels. In 1995, levels of particulates in central London averaged 72 micrograms per cubic metre. By 2005, it needs to be down to 50.

The system of permits is not new - the London lorry ban is a similar scheme. As a measure of last resort, motorists will be fined for driving fume-belching cars in restricted areas.

Drivers in the Westminster

Council area - considered to be in the cutting edge of green policy - face a £50 fixed penalty if their vehicles are found to break the MoT limits for pollution. Of the 160 vehicles tested in the first month, 62 failed the roadside tests.

Westminster also runs a scheme to highlight good practice. Drivers who modify their cars to low-pollution engines such as gas or add a high-performance catalytic converter, receive a "green permit" for their troubles.

However this could be extended to restrict motorists' right to roam. "We are looking to hire consultants to examine the feasibility of such a scheme and are in regular contact with the Government," said Leith Penny, the council's head of environment. "We need to know who would get these permits, who would administer it and who would enforce it," he added.

Civil servants said that the powers of the police to stop moving vehicles could be extended to teams of pollution busters.

On the Continent, such radical measures are not unusual. Stockholm has experimented with clean-car sites, and more recently Paris banned cars from the city centre on the basis of their registration plate.

"We are not considering that measure. The same thing happened in Athens - but it led to a 10 per cent fall in traffic and a 10 per cent increase in emissions because people bought older cars to use for alternative days," said one civil servant.

Wormwood Scrubs inquiry seizes documents from jail

INVESTIGATORS looking into allegations of brutality at Wormwood Scrubs prison yesterday seized documents from the jail's administrative files to help them with their inquiries. A Prison Service spokesman said the internal inquiry had continued without a break throughout the weekend, to a bid to complete the probe as quickly as possible. A dossier containing allegations of serious assaults on eight inmates has been compiled by London solicitors Hickman and Rose, who say they believe it represents only "the tip of the iceberg".

Two inmates were moved out of the west London prison on Saturday - one to hospital, one to another jail - after inquiry head Peter Atherton offered transfers to all in the jail's segregation wing, as well as to those involved in the allegations.

Cancer talk helps children

CANCER patients may help their children avoid psychological problems by talking freely with them about their disease, child health experts have claimed.

Research has shown that children of parents with cancer are at risk of developing psychological disturbance, but the level of anxiety is said to depend on whether the children are told about the illness and the extent to which they communicate with their parents. Professor Alan Stein, from the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, London, writes in the *British Medical Journal*: "In one study of parents with advanced cancer ... informed children had lower levels of anxiety than uninformed ones."

Better voice for the young

A CAMPAIGN to nominate a Minister for Youth starts today in which people aged 12-25 will be asked to put forward their suggestions for a person who can represent the interests of young people. The poll marks the start of the 2020 Vision Campaign, co-ordinated by the Industrial Society and supported by *The Independent*, to try and provide young people with greater representation.

Drugs tests for drivers

MOTORISTS will be subjected to roadside drugs testing for the first time today as police start trials of new detection devices.

Four police forces are carrying out pilot schemes following figures last month that showed one in five drivers killed in accidents is under the influence of illicit drugs. Drivers will be asked to take part voluntarily, and no prosecutions will result. The device being tested is an impregnated swab wiped across the forehead that can show the nature of any drugs taken.

Winning Lottery numbers

FIVE WINNERS shared Saturday's National Lottery jackpot of £38.9m. The winning numbers were 41, 15, 2, 26, 23 and 43. The bonus number was 5.

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**Blair gets the boot**

ABOUT a hundred women and children marched through the village of Brecon in mid-Wales on Saturday afternoon. While the British property market may be thriving in London and our bonus-fed City boys still lavish in Bollinger, life on small British family farms is tougher than ever, in large part due to the BSE crisis.

The Brecon women's placards bore slogans like "Tony, our kids' livelihoods are in your hands." The climax came when the mothers placed dozens of their children's Wellington boots (uncleaned) into a large parcel addressed to 10 Downing Street. It will be interesting to see how the spin-doctors handle this pungent evidence of contemporary British lifestyle. An exhibit in the Dome? Somehow Pandora doubts it.

Chilled out MP

WHAT IS UP with David Prior, Tory MP for Norfolk North West? A few days after admitting to have inhaled cannabis, he took about 30 minutes of Commons time to complain about the effect on his head of white lines painted in the middle of roads. He also put in a plea to change street lights from orange to white. His fervent plea was to calm down rural life. "Otherwise, people may be tempted to speed through the countryside," far out, David - how about painting all those trees psychedelic orange?

Academic wisdom

TONIGHT is the night when all of America is submerged under a flood of gratuitous thank-you tracts at the Academy Awards. Pandora must confess to feeling unwell every time a glittering star gushes his or her thanks to the "Academy". Is this the same sanguine and benevolent Academy that failed to nominate for Best Film such indisputable masterpieces as *Some Like It Hot*, *The African Queen* (above), *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and *Singin' in the Rain*?

He swallows it

SPEAKING of inhaling, an American journalist and former Oxford classmate of President Clinton's last week revealed an impressive dimension to Teflon Bill's spin-doctoring talents. Recalls David Maraniss, "We spent enormous amounts of time trying to teach him to inhale" when he was a Rhodes scholar, but without success. On the other hand, Clinton "consumed several brownies with various hashish and marijuana in it". When asked about Maraniss's claim, a White House spokesman said: "I don't know, and I don't care."

Pandora



Board: Farmers' children joined the crowds in York at the weekend as European finance ministers gathered to discuss the single market. Snub for Britain, page 20 · Photograph: UNP

Farmers pioneer new pastures in Eastern Europe

By Rosa Prince

FARMERS attracted by lure of low prices and high yields are quitting Britain to seek pastures new in the former communist states of Eastern Europe.

Demand is so high there are waiting lists for those wishing to go on missions to explore farming opportunities in countries such as Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania.

A 12-person trip to Poland and Hungary - organised by the East European Trade Council (EETC) and due in late Britain next month - has attracted interest from four times that number, and companies who specialise in finding land for British farmers say they cannot work fast enough to fill demand.

A recent conference run by the EETC and the Ministry of Agriculture was attended by 200 farmers.

Jan Cermack, who works for Adas, an agricultural advisory service, said: "We have a large waiting list. The problem is not with demand. It is finding the right farms.

"These farmers have the pioneer spirit. In the old days they would expand into New Zealand, Australia, Canada. Now the Communists have fallen there are opportunities just round the corner. Land is available here and it is much cheaper."

As land in Britain becomes more expensive, Eastern Europe's vast acres have become increasingly attractive. Although many states still prohibit the sale of land to foreigners, renting is cheap. In Britain, rents are about £150 an acre; in Romania the price is £25 an acre and just £8 in the Czech Republic.

John MacGregor, of Laurence Gould Partnership, an Edinburgh-based land consultancy company, said: "At the

Hungary since 1992. He said: "It's not all milk and honey. You need to have an understanding of the country you are going to live in, the background, the way they have transformed from a communist system to a free-market economy. If you have got that it can be a great opportunity."

Jeremy Elgin, from the EETC, said the farmers were not just in it for a fast buck. "They are frontiersmen," he said. "It's a very romantic thing to do. They're not carpetbaggers - a lot of these people think they can go over there and really help."

Although the bureaucracy can be daunting, British farmers say they are treated fairly well by the East Europeans. James Janoway, a third-generation farmer from Basingstoke, Hampshire, has farms in Romania and the Czech Republic. He said: "One of the attractions of both countries was to get away from the creeping bureaucracy here. But I was wrong about that. The bureaucracy is terrible, although there is always a way around it."

Mr Janoway said he broke even from the farms in his first year. He is more confident about his future in the Czech Republic than he is in Romania, where he farms in the Danube Delta.

He said: "The Czech Republic is a bit of a halfway house between here and Romania. Prague is a lovely place. But Romania is a bit of a culture shock, no doubt about it ... Everybody's outlook on life is very different from our own. They don't have a lot of entertainment or money. They live a fairly meagre existence."

"It is wonderful land though, flat plains that go on and on, you can see for 50 miles."

"They have deep black top soil that gives down well. Wonderful land, it's just in the wrong place!"



Frontiersman: Peter Bennett who farms in Hungary

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You make it what it is

Social workers 'biased against adoption'

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

SOCIAL workers allow political correctness to cloud their judgement when it comes to adoption, ruling out many prospective parents for inadequate reasons, the Institute of Economic Affairs said today.

It calls for adoption to be taken away from local authorities and handed over to voluntary organisations.

Adoption agencies and social services departments, however, reacted with anger to the report calling it "one-sided" and "oversimplified", arguing that the first family of choice for any child is his or her own family.

Adoptions have fallen from 21,000 in 1975 to fewer than 6,000 20 years later with baby adoptions down from 4,500 to 322. Around half of these adoptions are by step-parents. Only 3.5 per cent of children in care - where parents are unable or unwilling to look after them - are adopted.

The author of the study, Patricia Morgan, claims that prejudice against adoption is so great amongst childcare professionals that they will find a reason to disqualify many parents.

"Adoption has never been fully acceptable and women have been ambivalent about it," says Ms Morgan. "But there is always a problem with children who are not wanted by their original families, or who can't care for them. These things still occur and we still have a problem of what to do with children who are socially displaced."

Adoptions tend to be successful, she says, with studies

showing a great deal of attachment between adoptees and their adoptive parents, and high self esteem for adoptees. A study of long-term outcomes for adoptees born between 1948 and 1951 found that 60 per cent were very satisfied with their experience of growing up and a third had acquired higher educational qualifications.

In comparison, outcomes for those in care are extremely poor. A quarter of adult prisoners were in local authority care before the age of 16.

Ms Morgan thinks that

'Political correctness and female ambivalence is hindering adoption'

many social service departments are so prejudiced against adoption, seeing preservation of ties with the child's natural family paramount, that they find a reason to disqualify many applicants to be parents.

This comes to a head with trans-racial adoption - adoption by parents of one race of a child of another race. "Trans-racial adoption, according to accepted wisdom amongst social workers, destroys a child's sense of identity," she says. "There is in fact no research evidence to support the claim that trans-racial adoption harms children."

She argues that the care system presently focuses on temporary placements such as short-term foster care or local authority care for children who are socially displaced.

Adoptions tend to be successful, she says, with studies

authority care. "These things are not permanent, the social workers think that somehow the children will go back to their original families. This is simply not realistic. Large numbers of children will never go back because of neglect or abuse. We need to have an alternative." She adds that if parents whose children have been taken into care are not fit to have their children back after a year, the child should be free for adoption.

But the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering was highly critical of the report.

"We understand that there are many prospective adopters who wish to adopt young children but their wishes should not come before what is best for the child," said Felicity Collier, BAAF director. "If an adoption does not work out the effect on the child can be deeply traumatic. Matching families to children is a critical process; it is facile to call this 'political correctness'."

"We are aware that some children wait for too long for families and this is not acceptable. But the fault lies not in ideology but in the failure of some authorities to plan effectively for children in their care and to make resources for recruiting the very special adoptive families needed."

Moira Gibb, chair of the children and family committee, said that the suggestion that adoption should be taken away from local authorities was "daft". Adoption services are mainly for children in local authority care and adding another agency would only add to delays. We have had massive success in reducing the population of children in care."



Stolen childhood: Sue McKenzie at her home in Earls Barton, Northampton - 'I never knew adoption was an alternative' Photograph: Steve Hill

'We were grateful, we had no choice'

"THE PROBLEM about the issue of adoption is that unless you know it's an option it is not an issue," says Sue McKenzie, who was in the care of her local authority for 16 years. Writes Glenda Cooper.

"Unless you know that adoption is an alternative you are unlikely to want it."

Sue and her sister were fostered after her parents split up and the children were taken into care. "Adoption was never discussed. We probably

wouldn't have been in care if we were growing up today. I'm mixed race and when my mother left, my father who is black was left looking after us. To those times it wasn't thought suitable - a black man looking after two young girls."

Her experience of fostering was not positive: "It was almost Dickensian. The foster children would do the chores and wait on the family. We were only supposed to be going for a few weeks, but as it became longer the family would say you were a horrible child so we tended to feel grateful, as opposed to feeling we had a choice or a say in what happened to us."

Sue says it was very difficult to tell anyone what she felt:

"Social workers did visit but they were very good friends with the foster mother and father, and she would say if we said anything she'd get us afterwards, and we wouldn't be believed anyway. And they always visited us at the house and so we couldn't say anything because when you're a child you think walls have ears and you would be heard."

"If you said you wanted to be adopted or that you were unhappy to your social worker it then becomes their problem that they have to deal with, more work for them."

"I think it becomes difficult when you grow up a bit and you see that other people have a different way of living, that other children talk about their family and you realize you are not an ordinary kid. Then you are continually reminded you are only foster children."

Man still being quizzed over sex attacks

POLICE are still questioning a 40-year-old man arrested in connection with a series of sex attacks on women across the country which began in 1982.

Officers arrested him in Leeds on Friday night as part of the Operation Lynx investigation involving three forces.

Magistrates have granted an extension to the custody time limit, allowing questioning to continue at a police station in the city yesterday.

Detectives from West York-

shire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, led by West Yorkshire Assistant Chief Constable Lloyd Clarke, have been investigating five attacks. All involved the abduction of lone women.

The operation was launched last summer when DNA tests convinced police the same man was responsible for all the attacks. In each case a woman was driven away and then seriously sexually assaulted.

The first attack was on 3 December 1982, when a 30-year-old

woman was abducted in central Bradford, driven to Leeds/Bradford Airport and assaulted. A month later, a woman of 26 was abducted in the car park of Leeds general infirmary, driven to the outskirts of the city and assaulted.

The attacker then drove back to a canal, where he tied her up and threw her in the water. She managed to free her hands and feet, then swam to safety.

On 10 May 1984, a 20-year-old woman was driven out of

Leicester, raped and then left in the car near to where she had been abducted. It was not until May 1993 that another attack took place, in Nottingham. After being driven from the city, the 24-year-old victim was attacked and left near a reservoir.

The last attack took place in Leeds in July 1995, where a woman aged 22, was attacked in a multi-storey car park. She had her eyelids superglued together before being assaulted and dumped next to a canal.

THE FIRST consumer product bearing the official logo to commemorate Diana, Princess of Wales, goes on sale today - a tub of margarine.

Trustees of the Memorial Fund which approved the Flora "Thanks" promotion insisted it was a one-off move which would raise £250,000 for the charity from sales of the tube.

It is part of the Flora London Marathon fund-raising effort in which 600 runners, as Team Flora, plan to raise a fur-

ther £1.2m for the Memorial Fund. Diana's former butler, Paul Burrell, now a Fund trustee, was one of the main figures in arranging the deal. He will be running in the Marathon.

Supermarkets across the country will be selling the tubs which have Diana's official signature in purple and the word "Thanks" instead of the brand name, along the side. They will be sold alongside ordinary packs for the same price.

Vivienne Parry, a trustee of

the Fund, said: "It is not our intention to endorse consumer products - this is a one-off case related to the Flora London Marathon ... The manufacturers approached us and said they would be prepared to give us all proceeds from the sales. It is a very large amount of money."

Heleia Park of Flora described the tubs as a "celebratory pack" to support next month's marathon. All the proceeds will go to the Memorial Fund, said Ms Parry, who denied the company

would benefit from the association with the late Princess.

Meanwhile, the RAC announced that it wants to run a seatbelt campaign using the death of the Princess of Wales as a warning to motorists.

The organisation, which accepts it is dealing with a sensitive issue, is to ask Buckingham Palace and the Princess's family for approval to run the campaign, which would allege that the Princess could have lived if she had worn a rear seatbelt.

Diana's logo spreads to tubs of margarine

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'Britain fights shy of EU plans for 'green' power'

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE Government is to oppose a European plan to spend £110m over the next decade, doubling the amount of energy it gets from renewable sources like sun, wind and water.

A European Union White Paper, *Energy for the Future: Renewable Sources of Energy*, is to be discussed by ministers at an Energy Council meeting in May, when a formal resolution could be adopted.

But MPs have now been told that John Battle, the energy minister, will oppose the plan to increase EU energy supplies derived from renewables from 6 per cent to 12 per cent.

Mr Battle has told the Commons European Legislation Committee: "The UK government will show enthusiasm for the [European] Commission's initiative, tempered with a strong dose of realism. Whilst supporting the principle of action to promote renewables, and the adoption of a more strategic approach, the UK will argue against the endorsement of any unrealistic targets and the adoption of measures which would impose disproportionate costs on consumers, industry or the taxpayer."

The minister was unable to say what the UK share of the £110m would be, but he added,

"It is likely to be in the range of £1bn-£3bn per annum."

While most of the investment would come from the private sector, significant public sector support would be expected, and Mr Battle warned: "This would add to existing pressures on the Community budget and UK public expenditure."

But the commission warned that unless the power share coming from renewable sources was increased, it would become increasingly difficult for the EU to comply with its commitments on environmental protection at European and international level.

The Brussels communication on the subject said that the "overwhelmingly positive response received during the consultation process has confirmed the commission's view that an indicative target is a good policy tool, giving a clear political signal and impetus to action."

It described the target of 12 per cent of energy supply from renewables as "ambitious but realistic"; Mr Battle considers his own domestic target - of possibly getting less than 5 per cent of energy from renewables - ambitious enough.

The Prime Minister said in December, at the time of the Kyoto Earth summit: "We need to look at new ways of producing energy. This could involve promoting greater use of solar

energy and making more use of renewable sources. This will ensure the UK delivers what it has signed up to, and will help other countries fulfil their commitments."

A government review of new and renewable energy policy, announced last June - is still continuing. It was asked to examine what would be necessary and practical "to provide 10 per cent of the UK's electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010".

But 10 per cent of electricity amounts to less than 5 per cent of all energy supplies, and even if the Government produces a positive result on that target, it would still amount to little more than a third of the new European ambition.



Blowing in the wind: Brussels says more investment in renewable power is imperative if the EU is to meet its commitments. Photograph: Steve Pyke

This month, half-a-million Premium Bond winners shared over £40 MILLION.

NHS chiefs face waiting lists threat

By Anthony Bevins

THE DIRECTORS of NHS authorities and trusts were yesterday threatened with the sack if they do not help Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, to meet his pledge to cut hospital waiting lists.

Mr Dobson, who last week pledged to reduce the waiting lists by 200,000 - to get them 100,000 patients below the queue left by the last government - is to meet senior officials and executives from the 520 health authorities and trusts over the next few weeks.

He said yesterday that he was confident that in large parts of the country, given the enthusiasm of NHS staff and the extra funds that had been committed in the Budget, the Government's pledge would be achieved.

He told BBC television's *Breakfast with Frost* that the message he would be delivering to the directors would be: "If you fail to do it, we'll have to get other people to come in and give you advice and give you help, but it's got to be delivered."

Asked whether they would be sacked if they failed, Mr Dobson replied: "Well, I can't get rid of the paid officials of the National Health Service, but the

people I appoint as chairs and non-executive directors hold their positions while I have confidence in them, and I have confidence in the vast majority of them."

"I'm taking responsibility for the decisions I take, and what I do want to see is the non-executive directors and chairs taking more responsibility in future for the outfits that they're involved in running."

Ministers are disturbed that there is a marked disparity in the delivery of services between different authorities and trusts, and they want to encourage them all to achieve the standards of the best.

But there is no doubt that if the poorest authorities and trusts do not pull their socks up, management shake-up will follow. The policy had been used to help badly-performing schools, and it could also be applied to under-performing hospitals.

Mr Dobson's message will be bolstered by the fact that NHS directors are not the only ones with their jobs on the line.

In saying that he is taking responsibility for his own decisions, he is spelling out a political fact - that his own job would be in jeopardy if significant progress was not made within the next 12 months.

Tatchell urges gay rights probe

OUTRAGE, the gay rights group, is stepping up its pressure for a Commons select committee investigation into discrimination against gays and lesbians, writes Anthony Bevins, Political Editor.

Peter Tatchell, the Out-Rage campaigner, said yesterday that he had received the support of Mike O'Brien, the Home Office minister, for a reference to the Home Affairs Select Committee.

"An investigation could help revive the stalled campaign for lesbian and gay human rights. It would be the most significant report on homosexual issues since the 1957 Wolfenden Report," Mr Tatchell said in a statement.

In a letter sent this month to Chris Mullin, Labour chairman of the select committee,

Mr Tatchell said he had made three requests for an investigation over the last eight years; something routinely rejected by the Tony administration.

"We are aware that the select committee has produced three reports on race issues over the last decade, but had not once investigated the equally serious issue of legal discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

"We are, for example, denied the right to marry and to any alternative legal recognition of our partnerships, banned from membership of the armed forces, penalised by insurance and mortgage companies, turned down for consideration by many fostering and adoption agencies, discriminated against in pension and inheritance rules."

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Inflexible employers 'driving women out of Britain's workforce'

By Kate Watson-Smyth

EMPLOYERS must adapt their working practices to meet the demands of working mothers, or they could face a manpower crisis by the next millennium, a study warns today.

A survey of 1,000 professional women found that 57 per cent believed their career development had slowed down since having children and 41 per cent had to take a

cut in salary on return to work. As a result of this, nearly one fifth of those questioned (18 per cent) said they were considering not having children, given the perceived inflexibility of employers and the impact of this attitude on their career prospects.

Carol Savage, managing director of The Resource Connection, which carried out the survey in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Mar-

keting, said that British business can no longer ignore changing patterns in the workforce.

"Women now account for 44 per cent of the total workforce in this country and employers must keep pace with the changes if they are to retain the best qualified and most proficient staff," she said.

The mentality among senior managers that there is a direct correlation between the hours spent in

the office and promotional prospects is very common. But this study shows that what is needed is measurement by output achieved, not hours invested."

Almost 90 per cent of the women questioned for the survey said they wanted greater flexibility in their work patterns, including working from 10am to 4pm, with the chance to do more work from home, longer holidays and to be paid by the hour.

Ms Savage said many professional women had given up work altogether because of the problems of finding adequate childcare at a reasonable cost and the lack of flexible working hours.

"I am happy to work a 12-hour day, if necessary, but I don't want to work from 8am to 8pm. I would rather stop at 5pm so that I can put my son to bed and then work at home from 8pm to midnight," she said.

"Employers have got to realise that that can be just as productive as staying late every night and until that happens then many talented women will continue to give up their careers. With 73 per cent of our study holding degrees and 23 per cent with masters degrees, there is no doubt that they are a valuable resource and unless employers change their attitude they will lose a valuable part of the workforce."

Pat Zadora, president of the Busi-

ness and Professional Women's Guild, said she was not surprised by the findings. "We have been seeing these problems for some considerable time and unless men and women can be treated on a equal basis with regard to children then things will not change. Childcare is still seen as an exclusively female area and that needs to change before employers will realise what is going on. We do need a change of attitude."

£50,000 a year puts railmen in new pay élite

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

THE DAY of the £50,000 a year train driver has dawned. So acute is the post-privatisation shortage of drivers that some companies are being forced to pay the kind of money earned by the heads of the very largest state schools, or the managing directors of medium-sized companies and more than pilots working for small airlines.

The train operating company currently paying the highest rates, according to informed industry sources, is South West Trains. Some drivers earned up to £52,000 a year by putting in the maximum hours and the average pay was around £35,000, the sources said.

Last year, the company narrowly escaped a £1m fine for cancelling up to 39 trains a day having "down-sized" the workforce by 70 drivers. Since then they have been forced to take on an even greater number than they made redundant and the 720 drivers currently on the pay roll are being stretched to the limits.

South West Trains, along with most of the other 24 passenger train operators, are also paying premium rates in order to keep their employees.

Since privatisation the number of drivers being trained

has declined and companies are poaching each other's staff to ensure their services are kept running.

It is understood that some ex-train drivers who became depot managers are going on refresher courses to resume their previous careers in order to take advantage of the bonanza.

While Aslef, the train drivers' union, opposed privatisation, it is determined that its members will now reap the benefits of a new market for drivers created by competing companies.

Lew Adams, general secretary of Aslef, calculated that the new network needed another 450 drivers and that the shortage would worsen unless companies trained more drivers.

The wage inflation could get worse. Commenting on the scarcity of drivers and the competition for their services, Mr Adams said: "If they think they are going to be able to stick to pay rises which match the rate of inflation, they've got another think coming."

Having recently achieved a 37-hour working week, the union plans to reduce it to 35 hours - a policy which will exacerbate the shortage.

Last December, the union and Richard Branson's Virgin Trains, which runs both the West Coast Main Line and



Fast forward: Decades on from the 'golden age of steam' - when pay was poor and the work arduous - train drivers are entering a new era of rich rewards. Photograph: Dale Cherry

the CrossCountry services, launched a joint venture to recruit train and supply drivers to the network.

All but one of the companies have agreed "restructuring" deals with Aslef so that the union's members are paid salaries instead of basic pay plus a Byzantine series of add-ons. Mr Adams has warned ScotRail, the only company to stick with the old system, that it faced conflict with the union unless it

agreed a new structure and might also be the victim of poaching raids from other operators.

A spokeswoman for South West Trains, which last year contributed an estimated £4m to its parent company Stagecoach, said it was out the company's policy to discuss drivers' earnings, but pointed out that the basic salary was around £25,000 a year.

She said drivers could only work a maximum of 13 days consecutively before taking a day off. All drivers were entitled to two rest days a week and many chose not to work on their days off.

South West Trains' pay rates were "competitive", she said, and the company was currently training 30 drivers.

■ Aslef is to seek damages and legal moves to clear the name of a train driver who served a prison sentence after pleading guilty to manslaughter over a train crash which killed five people eight years ago.

The union said it believed Robert Morgan should be exonerated of blame over the crash at Purley, south London, in 1990, in which five people died and 88 were injured.

Mr Morgan was driving a Littlehampton to Victoria train which hit the rear of a Horsham to Victoria train, throwing six coaches down an embankment.

Mr Morgan was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, with 12 suspended, which was reduced to four months by the Court of Appeal.

Aslef said it had decided to seek a judicial review of the case following the acquittal earlier this month of another driver involved in a train crash.

Peter Afford, who drove a train involved in a crash at Watford Junction in 1996 in which a woman died and 70

people were injured, was cleared of manslaughter by a jury at Luton Crown Court.

Union general secretary Lew Adams said the union would be seeking "substantial damages and exoneration" for Mr Morgan.

"It is quite clear that Mr Morgan was left to take the blame when the accident may have been caused by infrastructure shortcomings," said Mr Adams.

DAILY POEM

Entertaining women

By D J Enright

In a night-club in Hiroshima,
A combo playing noisily.
A girl asked sweetly, "Kohi shimasu?":
Should they make coffee?
No, he replied, it kept him awake.
It was "koi", it struck him later, not "kohi":
It was love she had offered, oot coffee.
The thought kept him awake.

Next day, as a guest of Rotary,
He conveyed (without authority)
Fraternal greetings from Cradley Heath.
Waiting outside was a victim
(Rotary does not entertain women).
A victim for him to see, to see him.
Him with his face still scarlet,
Her with her white scarred arms.

This is our final selection from D J Enright's *Collected Poems 1948-1998* (Oxford University Press, £15). This poem first appeared in *Instant Chronicles* (1985).

Straw's son files police complaint

By Kate Watson-Smyth

WILLIAM STRAW, the teenage son of the Home Secretary, has filed a complaint against police officers claiming they used excessive force when arresting two football fans.

William, 17, who embroiled his father in controversy last December when he received a caution for selling cannabis in a pub, made the complaint last November after witnessing an incident involving Chelsea fans at Euston station in London.

He is expected to be interviewed about the incident, which was filmed on closed-circuit television cameras, next week.

Officers were escorting the fans back to London from a



Witness: William Straw saw arrest of football fans

match against Blackburn Rovers, the team William supports, when trouble broke out on the train. Police were waiting on the platform at Euston and made two arrests.

William, a passenger on the train, saw what happened and later made a complaint against four officers alleging that excessive force had been used in the incident.

John Callendar, acting superintendent of British Transport Police, said: "We can confirm that a complaint was received from a passenger on the train." He added that the complaint had also been lodged by one of those arrested, but it had since been withdrawn.

"The outstanding complaint

is being investigated under the normal... procedures and the complainant will be interviewed, probably next week."

A Home Office spokeswoman said that the issue was a private matter for the Straw family.

Detectives are investigating an alleged attempted breakout from Whitemoor top-security jail, police said yesterday.

A man has been questioned by officers investigating claims of an escape plot at the jail near March, in Cambridgeshire.

Police said the man, who is 33 and comes from Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, had been freed on police bail until 6 April.

The Prison Service said yesterday that it was unable to comment on the investigation. But it is understood that detectives are investigating reports that there was a plan to blast a hole in a wall at the prison and to let six prisoners to freedom by helicopter.

A spokesman for Camb-

ridgeshire Police would only say: "On March 2 this year a 33-year-old man from Bury St Edmunds was arrested in connection with an investigation into an alleged conspiracy to break out of HMP Whitemoor at March."

The man was taken to Wisbech police station for questioning and was later released on bail pending further inquiries. He is due back at Wisbech police station on April 6.

Whitemoor, which opened in 1991, is set in an isolated part of the Fens and houses some of the UK's most dangerous prisoners in its special secure unit - a self-contained jail within a jail. An inquiry into the escape severely criticised the security regime at Whitemoor.

Eighteen months later prison officers foiled another attempted escape after a set of replica keys and home-made weapons were found inside the prison. A tip-off resulted in the discovery of two plastic key-moulds.

In April last year a prison officer was held hostage at the jail for more than seven hours by two inmates believed to have been armed with a knife.



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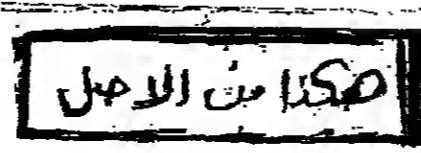
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Clinton carries mixed blessings to Africa

By Mary Braid
in Accra

THE UNITED STATES has once considered Africa important enough – politically or economically – to merit a proper tour by an American president. So why has President Bill Clinton chosen to make an 11-day tour of the continent, and why now?

There is of course a feeling

in Washington that Mr Clinton (and his wife, Hillary) will be so far from Washington far so long simply in order to avert the relentless volley of sex allegations against him, though the president seems unlikely to win a reprieve with more than 200 Washington-based journalists accompanying him on the trip.

The president's advisers claim he has been devising a

new strategy for relations with Africa since the late 1980s, when the continent's usefulness as a battleground for proxy super power wars ended along with the cold war.

Self interest and ethics, US government officials insist, now compel the US to find a way of ensuring that Africa is not left behind in economic globalisation. More than 700 million people in sub-Saharan Africa create

a huge untapped market for US goods and the promising economic improvements in a handful of African countries make trade between the world's richest and poorest continents a possibility.

Not everyone is convinced by the US's stated motives. Some analysts say Mr Clinton's trip is largely symbolic and designed to play to the African-American constituency at home.

Those who insist the trip is for a home audience point to the president's visit to Ghana today – the first African country to win independence from European colonists – and to the former slave fortress at Goree Island, Senegal. The emotional climax of the tour, and the television episode that the President will be most keen to have played back home, is his planned speech at Goree Island, at the end of

his trip. An estimated 2 million Africans were dispatched as slaves from the fortress to the American colonies.

Taking President Clinton at face value it is true that some African countries are showing signs of economic recovery and tendencies towards democracy. It may be that President Clinton believes this progress deserves recognition.

It would be easy, then, to see

why Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Botswana and Senegal are being visited. Today's first stop could be seen as a pat on the back for Jerry Rawlings, a former flight lieutenant who took power in Ghana after staging a military coup but has since moved towards democracy to secure international loans. The Clinton administration comes to Africa bearing the African Growth and Opportu-

nity Act. It offers better trade terms for African countries which meet democratic and economic requirements. Ironically, some of Africa's poorest countries complain that stringent economic rules set by international lenders actually undermine fledgling democracies by imposing additional hardships on populations which already rate among the poorest in the world.

Ghana glad of its place on American map of the world

IN ACCRA'S blistering midday heat yesterday, preparing for history proved a tricky, sweaty business. *Akwoofa* (welcome) Bill Clinton signs were everywhere. But the artist responsible for the biggest was still battling to finish the US flag.

Painting the three-striped Ghanaian flag, with its solitary star, had been easy; not so the stripes and the 50 stars.

The US flag painting is just one in a swarm of demands which has descended on Accra since it was announced Ghana would be the first stop on the first tour of Africa by an American president.

Accra has since undergone a minor facelift; the best this poor nation can buy. Buildings have been painted and the route from the airport spruced up and sanitised. The city's huge open sewer has been boarded out of sight of President Clinton, his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea.

But even the weight of the US advance party – hundreds strong – has taxed Accra. And when President Clinton and his 800-strong entourage arrive this morning they will stay just seven hours. The Third World capital, suffering periodic power blackouts, could not provide the communications centre required for the 200 Washington-based journalists jetting in with Clinton to cover the 11-day tour at \$40,000 a head.

Accra was desperate to have the world's most powerful nation stay overnight but lacked enough space.

The President's visit marks a great day – but a short one, writes Mary Braid

market hotel rooms. It did not help that one of the three largest hotels, The Golden Tulip, is Libya-backed and therefore out of bounds to the US administration.

The First and Third worlds have collided with no end of jarring but Ghanaians, who began queuing to see the President at 5 o'clock this morning, are still upbeat about a visit that they hope will change perceptions of Africa and ensure, as the mighty US has promised, that the world's poorest continent is not left behind in economic globalisation.

"It will be a crucial day for Ghana," said one taxi driver. But he did not miss the irony of all the preparation and raised hopes for such a brief visit. "It will also be a short one," he added dryly.

Cynics say the US tour will be all show and no substance; and that in any commercial partnership between Africa and the US only America can be the winner. But in deeply religious Ghana – where hoardings advertise a thousand evangelical and Baptist churches and businesses adopt names like the In God We Trust Hair Salon – there is more faith.

That is a small miracle given Ghana's history. Two and a half hours along the coast stands the ruins of the Elmina slave fort, which in another time lured the world's most powerful nations to African shores. Over four centuries, tens of millions of Africans were hunted down and imprisoned in forts like this to await transfer to the Americas and West Indies.

In recent days many members of the US advance party – white and African-American – have visited here. President Clinton is scheduled to make a symbolic visit to another slave centre off the coast of Senegal at the end of his tour; a move expected to delight black Americans back home.

Inside Elmina, Felix Nguah, fort guide, is explaining the West's previous exploitations of Africa during the slave and colonial periods. As he shows them the dungeons where female slaves were kept by the Portuguese and the Dutch – separate from male slaves but available to the white fort governor and his men – he warns a group of Ghanaian schoolchildren to question all they are taught.

He points to the old Dutch Re-

formed Church chapel in the fort's courtyard. Here the pious white Christians prayed to their God while Africans languished in the dungeons below. "And they say Africans are barbaric," says Mr Nguah, shaking his head. "The church is guilty of so much sin and so many lies."

President Clinton has been under pressure to use his arrival on African soil today to apologise for slavery, and

its aftermath. His advisers have made clear that will not happen. Mr Nguah says an apology by itself would be pointless. Only recompense, like better trade terms or relief from crippling debts on international loans, would give it meaning.

President Clinton comes to Africa today armed with a few economic promises and strategies; debt forgiveness is not among them.



Artist's welcome: Emmanuel Baffour finishing his poster of Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings and Bill Clinton ready for the US president's visit to Accra. Photograph: Reuters

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France sees a spectre of President Le Pen

THE SPECTRE which haunts respectable political opinion in France - the spectre of a President Jean-Marie Le Pen - could become disturbing reality today.

The leader of the far-right National Front hopes to baffle his few-found allies from the French centre-right into choosing him this morning as president of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region: one of the most populous and high-profile areas of France, covering the Mediterranean coast from Marseilles to Nice. If he persuades 21 dissident members of the Gaullist RPR party and the liberal UDF alliance to back him when the regional assembly meets this morning, the National Front will have made

Forty per cent did not bother to vote, but now France's political landscape has been bulldozed

the most significant electoral conquest in its 25-year history. The regional presidency does not bestow enormous power but it would give the NF the vital oxygen of respectability.

It may be, however, that Mr Le Pen has over-reached himself. The National Front moved at the weekend to spring the trap into which it had tempted rebellious elements of the "traditional" right last week. Five centre-right regional presidents were chosen on Friday with NF votes, despite threats from their national leadership.

The Front said at the weekend that it expected the dissident centre-right to return the favour and make Mr Le Pen, 69, president of greater Provence today. (The NF won 37 seats in the regional elections last Sunday week, the same as the "traditional" right parties.) As a quid-

NF on brink of most significant conquest in 25 years; writes John Lichfield in Paris

pro quo, the NF said it would help to elect a centre-right rebel today in the greater Paris region, the Ile-de-France. This may be too much, too soon, even for the rebels of the "respectable" right.

They were still seeking to claim at the weekend that they had accepted NF support, without preconditions and without formal alliances.

The abrupt demand that Mr

Le Pen should be made, on the back-scratching principle, regional president of the third most populous region of France has unnerved this pretence. The 21 rebels in Provence had, foolishly, hoped that the 37 NF councillors would vote for one of them as president today: but the Front made it clear on Saturday night that this was a non-starter. One compromise possibility may be the election as regional president of another Front figure, possibly the party's Number Two, Bruno Mégret, or the mayor of Toulon, Jean-Marie Le Chevallier.

Whatever way the vote goes in Marseilles, France is faced with a new and dangerous political landscape. The "respectable" or traditional right has exploded into two camps.

There is a *coup de force*, right-wing grouping mostly from the UDF but also containing parts of the Gaullist RPR, which will be forced into permanent electoral alliance with the NF. The "Republican" rump of the RPR, and remnants of the UDF, refusing all political deals with a xenophobic and anti-democratic party, will be left to rally around a much weakened President Jacques Chirac. The upshot, according to one RPR leader, could be to leave the French left "in power for the next 50 years". The sheer pace of political developments in France in the last seven days has been breathtaking - and scar-

ing. As a result of an election in which 40 per cent of those eligible did not bother to vote, the political landscape of post-war France has been bulldozed.

The historian of French

right-wing politics, René Rémond, said yesterday: "Now that the barrier which separated the NF from other parties has fallen, everything is possible. He compared the situation to the 1930s, when large elements of the right became spell-bound by fascism. The problem now, as then, he said, is the muddled and poorly led centre-right offered a 'weak identity' and the NF a 'strong identity'. From being a 'pole of repulsion', the NF had become a 'pole of attraction'.

John Lichfield in Paris

FRONT NATIONAL

Respectability: Jean-Marie Le Pen, the National Front leader, could become President of the Côte d'Azur region

Pope in plea to Nigeria

ONITSHA, Nigeria (AP) — Braving sweltering heat, Pope John Paul II issued a powerful call yesterday for change in Nigeria, telling Nigerians to rid their society of "everything that offends human dignity or violates human rights".

Hundreds of thousands turned out for the Papal Mass in the country's Roman Catholic heartland. Since arriving on Saturday for a three-day visit, the Pope has surprised many here with the directness of his message to the military regime.

People urged the Pope to help free Nigerians from the shackles of the junta. Noting the generals' promise to hold elections later this year, the Pope said "there was no place" for abuse of power, misuse of authority, or arbitrarily excluding individuals from politics.

Vatican officials pressed for the release of some 60 political opponents and journalists — hoping the government would show some leniency, as happened in Cuba, where Fidel Castro released 299 prisoners after the Pontiff's January visit.

Bonn threat

GERMANY is threatening a European Union budgetary crisis after warning European finance ministers in York at the weekend it would block planned EU reforms unless its own annual bill for membership of the bloc is cut.

Bonn's threat raises serious obstacles to EU expansion and raises doubts over the future of Britain's budget rebate.

— Katherine Butler

Syrian doubt

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said after talks with President Hafez al-Assad yesterday that Syria was sceptical about an Israeli offer for conditional Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

— Reuters, Damascus

Crash deaths

THREE people on the ground were killed yesterday when a Philippine Airlines Airbus 320 with 127 people on board ploughed into a shanty town after overshooting the runway at Bacolod in the central Philippines.

— Reuters, Bacolod

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IT'S CLEVER STUFF

Albanians go to polls in defiance of Milosevic

By Steve Crawshaw
in Pristina

THE HUGE queue of Albanian voters was pressed tightly together all the way up the broad stairs of the Dardania primary school in Pristina; downstairs, the queue spilled out into the playground. Upstairs, they pressed against the tables, so that it was difficult for anybody to move. The Serb authorities have declared yesterday's elections in Kosovo, with its 90 per cent Albanian population, to be illegal and irrelevant. But the scenes at the Dardania primary school in Kosovo's capital showed a nonchalant defiance of President Slobodan Milosevic's will.

The presidential and parliamentary elections come at a time of considerable tension in the province, following the killing of dozens of Albanians

by Serb forces in recent weeks.

Serb nationalists are being bussed in from all over the country to a demonstration in Pristina today; many Albanians say they will stay off the streets, because of the fear of violence.

Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo, was the only candidate for president. The Serb authorities did not crush the elections, seeking instead to ignore them – although Serb media prominently reported an alleged incident in which 100,000 ballot sheets were found to have been tampered with. Mr Rugova's name had reportedly been circled, in advance of polling day. Certainly, there was considerable scope for electoral irregularity. More remarkable, however, were the attempts to at least provide electoral supervision – including the checking of identity documents

and cross-checking of voters' lists.

Several radical Albanian parties argued that the election should be postponed until they could also take place in the Drenica region, where the recent massacres took place. The heavy police presence in Drenica made voting impossible there.

However, most Albanians

seemed ready to ignore the disputes between the political factions.

Mr Rugova declared yesterday "a very important day for the independence and freedom of Kosovo". Voters shared a fury and despair at recent bloodshed – together with a strong belief that the independence of Kosovo is increasingly becoming inevitable.

There is also a widespread fear that war may be on the way. "We are not for war. But if it comes to war, we are ready to fight," said a 49-year-old man

in the little town of Lipjan, south of Pristina. Exactly equivalent declarations can be heard on the other side.

Many Albanians have convinced themselves that the West is ready to support Kosovo's aspirations to independence. "Why did Europe close its eyes for so long?" is a much-heard phrase on the streets of Pristina. But few seem aware of the extent of continuing Western confusion on policy towards Kosovo.

Pro-government Serb news-

papers yesterday gleefully quoted the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, who argued that "nobody on the planet" believed an independent Kosovo was a viable prospect.

Most Western politicians are wary of the knock-on effects of independence for Kosovo, with potential further instability throughout the region.

Kosovo ballot: Ethnic Albanians waiting to vote in Dardania primary school, Pristina, yesterday. Photograph: David Rose



Peking softens line on the 'one baby' rule

Teresa Poole in
Peking sees change
in China's tough
population control

IN A DEPARTURE from its controversial approach to family planning, China has launched a pilot rural population project which will drop the coercive system of fixing quotas for the number of babies born. Instead, family planning officials will try the gentler methods of education and persuasion as a means of encouraging voluntary contraceptive use and restricting the birth rate. The pilot programme is backed by \$14m (£8.5m) from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the first time for three years that the UN body has financed a project in China.

The potentially significant change in approach will be tried in 32 counties in 22 provinces, covering about 20 million people out of the country's 1.22 billion total. Both Peking and the UN have, for their own reasons, kept the project low-profile. The government does not want its people to think that the "one child" policy has been abandoned; and the UN does not want its China activities to prompt an outcry about UN funding from US political groups which object to Peking's record of forced abortions and sterilisations.

The new pilot started quietly last month, but will formally launch in April. The counties chosen are mostly in central and western China, said the official *China Daily* at the weekend.

Cong Jun, at the State Family Planning Commission, said the move was a response to the 1984 UN population conference in Cairo which called for family planning to be part of wider reproductive healthcare programmes for women, including sex education. In the pilot areas, sex education will include information on venereal diseases and AIDS as well as contraception, and will also be available for teenagers.

China Daily said five kinds of contraceptives would be provided for couples "to choose

from". Peking will be watching to see whether the pilot, which is scheduled to run until 2000, results in a explosion of births. If it does not, and if it can be demonstrated that health education can result in couples voluntarily limiting family size – as has happened in other Asian countries – then the pilot study could result in a more humane family planning programme in the rest of China.

China's agreement to embark on the new pilot programme probably reflects both a wish to improve its human rights image and also the realisation that its often brutal, coercive policy has reached its limits. In the cities, couples are indeed permitted to have only one child. In the countryside these days, most families are allowed to have two, particularly if the first is a girl, so long as there is a five-year gap. Minority nationalities in rural areas are allowed up to three.

In reality, poor peasants often have more children, because they have little to lose if they do. Richer peasants are increasingly paying the fines or bribes to have more than the quota. So over the past two years there has been more emphasis from the Family Planning Commission on the need to combine population control with poverty alleviation measures with the motto: "fewer births quickly richer".

The one child policy was imposed in 1979 and China estimates that, without it, the population would have been 300 million higher today. Peking expects the population to peak at 1.6 billion in 2050 if the targets are achieved.

Arms inspector returns to Iraq

By Patrick Cockburn
in Baghdad

RICHARD BUTLER, the chief United Nations arms inspector, returned to Iraq yesterday on his first visit since the crisis over the inspection of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction last month which almost led to war. He said the agreement on 23 February between Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, and Iraq had "created a new spirit of co-operation".

Mr Butler, who has been accused by Iraq of seeking confrontation in the past, is accompanied by another UN envoy, Prakash Shah, who said yesterday he had been sent to avert any political crisis that might occur during the inspection of Iraqi sites. He will stay for six months. Mr Shah said: "We have been briefed to watch

developments in relations between Iraq and the UN, and to help to avert any escalation of the crisis which might develop."

Mr Shah said that the sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990 could not "stay forever". His appointment appears to curtail the influence of Mr Butler, whom Russia, France and China have seen as making inflammatory statements during the crisis, such as suggesting that Iraq might destroy Tel Aviv.

Mr Butler will have talks in the next two days over the inspection of eight Presidential sites during which his inspectors will be accompanied by diplomats. Before arriving in Baghdad, he said: "Iraq has the opportunity ... to tell us everything that it can about its chemical and biological weapons ... if they give us the truth ... we can be finished with all of this."

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**BRIEFING
PAKISTAN**

As it marks its national day, Anwar Iqbal looks at the country's past and future

CARVED out of British India in 1947, Pakistan is still struggling with its identity 50 years after its independence. Despite a strong desire to belong to the Muslim world, culturally and socially it is as much a part of the Subcontinent as it always was. The national identity of a Pakistani is also in conflict with the regional identities of various ethnic groups that live here. Despite this, the number of Pakistanis those who believe in a distinct identity as a Pakistani, is increasing steadily. There are large numbers of people in every province who have developed economic interests and social links with each other. Most Pakistanis believe that if given a chance their country may one day become one strong state with a common identity for all those living within its boundaries.

Although it looks unstable and weak, there are external and internal factors that help Pakistan. It has a small but vibrant middle class which believes in the country and is eager to contribute to its development. It has a bureaucracy which, despite its corruption, is well organised and disciplined. It has a strong army which, despite its involvement in politics, is still seen as a symbol of national integrity. Although the army has been involved in politics since 1958, it has not been affected by the political chaos that mars the country's democratic system. So far it has remained united under one command and there are no major rifts within its ranks.

Pakistan also has a language - Urdu - which is spoken and understood everywhere. In the beginning, the government's efforts to impose Urdu over provincial languages led to Urdu's rejection by other language groups. But during the last 50 years it has created a place for itself as the official national language of the country and also as the language of the media. Since 1985, the country has a free press which has played a key role in exposing corruption and administrative malpractice.

Although still mainly agricultural, urbanisation has been rapid in Pakistan. Old cities have grown almost 10 times since in-



Golden days: Relaxing in the Karakoram

Photograph: Axon

dependence in 1947 and scores of new cities have come up in each of the four provinces.

The United States and other Western powers would play a key role in any major change in the region and Pakistan's disintegration can't happen without their approval. It seems that despite the economic, cultural and political crises that Pakistan faces today, it will continue to exist as an independent nation in the near future, giving Pakistanis enough time and opportunity to form an identity of their own.

The country's number one problem is that of corruption. The corruption is so widespread that it has created a parallel economy and according to some experts the illegal economy generates twice as much cash as the national economy. Influential people borrow huge sums of money from the banks and never return them. Most of

them use their influence to get their debts waived. According to Dr M. Yaqub, governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, about 7,000 people owe more than 123 billion rupees to the banks and are unlikely to return it. "Two billion rupees are stolen every year from the government funds," says prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

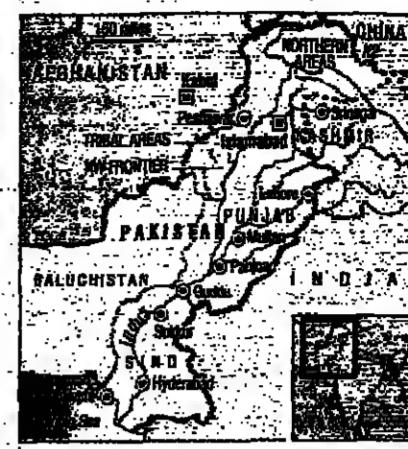
The material corruption has led to moral and intellectual corruption as well. It has created a new class of educated clowns who base their claim to rule on their ability to mimic the West and not on their ability to rule. They are, as Franz Fannon says, people with black or rather brown skins and white masks. They think they are superior, not because of their intellectual achievements, but because of their resemblance to the white people. They are not willing to share their wealth with the poor.

There is no major charity organisation in the country which is financed by the rich. Most charity hospitals, orphanages, and schools were opened before independence and are now run with the government's support. The two most prominent charitable institutions - Imran Khan's Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust and the Edhi Trust - run on donations from the lower and middle-class individuals and groups.

The efforts of the rich to distance themselves from local culture further alienate the élite from the people. They send their children to schools run by western or westernised teachers, where they are encouraged only to speak English. Those who can speak any of the local languages fluently are ridiculed. They are encouraged to wear western dress, follow western manners, and eat western food. They have

little interest in their religion and from the very beginning look at the West as the ideal human society. And thus, they consider themselves "honorary citizens of the West". They have little contact with the people who live around them, except with their servants and, therefore, have little love for them. Their love for the West increases when they go there, for visit or studies. And thus, even when they sincerely try to help, it does not work.

It is this gulf between the rulers and the ruled which is eating into the system. If you look at the tall buildings and the broad boulevards of Islamabad, Karachi or Lahore, the system looks strong; it looks even stronger when you watch smartly dressed and well-armed soldiers marching up and down Islamabad's main highway during the Independence Day parade. But on the in-



The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Total area: 803,540 sq km
Land area: 778,720 sq km
Comparative to UK: 3.5/1

Total population: 129,275,690 (July 1996, estimated)
0-14 yrs: 42% male 29,285,022; female 26,640,019
15-64 yrs: 53% male 35,395,261; female 33,733,798
65+ yrs: 5% male 2,821,721; female 2,597,018

Population growth rate: 2.24%
Comparative to UK: 2.9/1

Religious beliefs:

Muslim 97% (Sunni 77% Shi'a 20%) Christian, Hindu and Other 3%.
Ethnic divisions: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, Baloch, Mehajik.

Geography:

Panjabi 49%, Sindhi 12%, Seraiki 10%, Pashto 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, English (official and lingua franca of Pakistani elite and most government ministries) 8%.

Climate:

Mostly hot dry desert; temperate in the north-west; arid in the north; flat Indus plain in the east; mountains in the north and north-west; Balochistan plateau in the west.

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Lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m.

Government:

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Capital: Islamabad

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Markets riding the tiger

AKISTAN'S Karachi stock market index was one of the best performing markets in Asia last year, gaining almost 30 per cent in dollar terms. The magnitude of these gains may surprise many, given the severity of the country's problems, and in light of the Asia-wide financial crisis which struck the region in the second half of the year.

Many investors, however, argue it is exactly these troubled conditions which have created the ideal emerging market investment opportunity.

Charles Blackmore, country head of Jardine Fleming's Pakistan operation, said: "What we see in Pakistan at the moment is an enormous amount of potential. Last year's victory of the Sharif government has given us hope that the economy can be significantly turned around, the numbers on the trade and current account deficit, inflation and interest rates are already beginning to improve."

Last year's stock market gains came mostly in the first half, following Sharif's success and, for the first time in many years, the election of a government with a working majority. Investors hoped that with a stable and strong government in place, some of the many reforms necessary to attract additional investment cap-

ital to the country would be executed.

Isle of Man-based Colin Kingsnorth, an emerging market fund manager with value investor Regent Pacific, has around \$12m invested in Pakistan via two funds. He said:

"Sharif's victory led both domestic and foreign investors to feel the risk premium associated with the country was lower and interest rate sensitive stocks, such as Hub Power, had a very strong rally."

'The financial crisis in the rest of Asia had a major impact on Pakistan, though less so than in other countries'

The government's failure to capitalise on its political power and really push the reform process forward led to some selling later in the year. The crisis in the rest of Asia had a major impact on Pakistan, although less so than in other countries."

Despite initial disappointment, many investors remain optimistic that Sharif's government will privatise and deregulate the economy, stimulating growth and share price gains.

Appointed advisor. And there are also a few smaller privatisations taking place in the banking sector," said Mr Blackmore.

At the moment the Karachi stock market, with a market capitalisation of around \$1bn, is dominated by very few companies. The state-run telecommunications company, PTCL, accounts for almost one third of the market capitalisation and Hub Power accounts for a further 11 per cent of the market.

Susan Hogg

Jardine Fleming, which has brokerage, corporate finance and research capabilities in Karachi, forecasts a further market gain of 20 per cent in Dollar terms this year.

"By the end of 1998 we expect a substantial chunk of the privatisation programme to have been implemented, although there could be some delay to the timetable. There is good news on the Pakistan Telecommunications front, where Goldman Sachs has been

been one of its major attractions.

One Hong Kong-based fund manager says that one thing Pakistan can boast is well-managed companies. He said: "To have survived the difficult operating environment created by previous governments and entrenched interests is a miracle. Companies like Hub Power and Engro Chemical and Faysal Bank have proved that they can make money in the most trying circumstances, proving themselves to be exceptional companies. This can only bode well for when the macro environment improves."

One of the factors which continues to dominate fund managers' minds is the currency outlook. Although investors can have direct access to the market if they set up relationships with local brokers and custodians, the currency moves are difficult to manage. There was an 8.7 per cent devaluation last October and Jardine Fleming forecasts a further 7 per cent devaluation by the end of June.

23 March 1998

Today we join the people and Government of Pakistan and rejoice with them on this auspicious occasion.

LASMO, an international oil and gas exploration and production company with headquarters in the UK, has been involved in Pakistan for over ten years. Since 1995, LASMO the Company has been operating the gas production facility at Kadanwari and last year, LASMO made the largest discovery in Pakistan this decade.

LASMO is the most active explorer in Pakistan, with an extensive programme planned for the coming years.

We look forward to playing a significant role in meeting Pakistan's growing energy needs.



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Cut-price ticket heaven for travellers

WHENEVER a bunch of backpackers gathers, the debate on destinations follows a common circumnavigation: India, Thailand, Australia, the US, perhaps Mexico. But the country which arguably comprises the ultimate destination for independent travellers is almost always ignored - now, ironically, it is where the guidebook guru Tony Wheeler grew up.

Pakistan is all things to all travellers. For a start, reaching Pakistan allows you to make one of the two most challenging and invigorating journeys open to late 20th-century travellers: the great overland trek from Britain via Turkey and Iran, which my

friends Gurdev Singh and Bharat Parmar recently achieved inside a fortnight. Or, more alluring still, the best-value air ticket to anywhere that you can buy in Britain.

Once a week, Azerbaijan Airlines (0171-493 281) flies via Istanbul to Baku, where you transfer for the connecting flight to Karachi. This 16-hour journey costs you just £160, one-way. (The reason the one-way fare is quoted is that the return trip requires a six-day stay in the transit lounge at Baku airport.)

You arrive in what the Foreign Office and the State Department agree is one of the most dangerous cities on earth. So you should quickly

make good your escape; fortunately, this young country has a finer repertoire of tourist attractions than almost any other.

For supreme sub-continent immersion, make for Lahore, close to the Indian frontier. This superbly human city is a mix of cultures, cuisines and religions, whose civic tolerance is perhaps its greatest virtue.

At another extreme, Peshawar is more exotic still. The last stop before the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan is a real frontier town, where it is said that a Kalashnikov can be picked up as easily as a carpet.

The independent traveller will be most attracted, though, by the Hunza Valley. I have al-

ways thought of this as one of

the most misleading place names, since it conceals the truth that this great rift in the Himalayas will take you to gaspingly high altitudes and, ultimately, across the Karakoram into China.

But how to get home? Wherever you wish to travel next, there is one very good reason to take that one-way flight to Karachi: air fares in Pakistan are lower than anywhere else in the world. The author of *How to Fly Cheap*, Hugo van Reijen, suggests you should visit the country once a year to buy all your air tickets for the next 12 months.

Simon Calder

JPY 10.120

TECHNOQUEST

Interplanetary debris/ Crocodile armour/ Volcanoes/ Hiccups

Questions for this column may be submitted by e-mail to sci.net@campus.bt.com

Q Last week we were worried that an asteroid might hit us in 30 years' time. But how many meteors actually collide with the Earth in a typical year?

We don't know exactly, but many tonnes of material hit the Earth every year. The solar system is strewn with material left over from comets and asteroid collisions throughout history. As our planet sweeps through space, it goes through this debris which creates streaks of light in the atmosphere that are meteorites.

In the past, larger bits of rock have collided with the Earth creating impact craters, and destroying vast tracts of the Earth's surface. But these large pieces of rocks have mostly been swept up already, so these large impacts don't happen very often - fortunately.

Q Why are crocodiles scaly?

One of the main functions of crocodile scales is protection. This function is further reinforced by some of the scales (particularly those of the back) containing a deposit of bone ("osteoderm"); the heavily ossified scales along the back of a crocodile are commonly therefore referred to as the "armour".

Q What is myelin and why is it important to nerve cells?

In vertebrates, specialised cells called Schwann cells wrap themselves round the long thin bits of nerve cells in the peripheral nervous system. The Schwann cells form a thick insulating layer rich in lipids (a sort of fat) called the myelin sheath. This insulates the axon, rather like the plastic layer round a copper wire in an electrical flex. Nerve cells with myelin sheaths are called myelinated nerves.

Curiously, there is a type of mouse which has a genetic mutation that means that it has no myelinated nerves. Without the insulation that myelin provides, nerve impulses passing along one nerve cell also affect nearby nerve cells, some of which connect to muscles. The affected mouse shivers and makes jerking movements as its muscles are stimulated. People whose myelin sheaths are damaged as a result of multiple sclerosis have similar difficulties in controlling their muscles.

Q What is the biggest volcano? The island of Hawaii is probably the largest volcano on Earth. The distance from its base (on the floor of the Pacific Ocean) to the summit of Mauna Kea (about 13,000ft high) is some 30,000ft - higher than Everest.

Q What causes hiccups?

Underneath your lungs is a large muscle called the diaphragm. When it contracts, it pulls down on the lungs, making you breathe in. Hiccups are caused by your diaphragm suddenly contracting, making you breathe in involuntarily - generating a peculiar sound.

Q How do seed banks store seeds?

Seeds of the "orthodox" kinds are dried down to about 15 per cent moisture content, and then stored in deep-freeze at -20°C. (The temperature of liquid nitrogen is -196°C.) The moisture has to be removed so the water doesn't damage the cell walls as it freezes, because it expands. Some kinds of seeds can be dried further and then stored in it, but structural changes - for example in seed coats - may occur.

You can also visit the technquest World Wide Web site at <http://www.campus.bt.com/CampusWorld/pub/ScienceNet>

Questions and answers provided by Science Line's Dial-a-Scientist on 0345 600444

THE INDEPENDENT

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Do not miss this chance to win a fabulous one week all inclusive trip to Florida for two people. This includes flights, 7 nights accommodation at the Holiday Inn Cocoa Beach, car hire and a day at the Kennedy Space Centre Visitors centre. There is also the opportunity to witness a shuttle launch, subject to launch dates. Readers up will receive a copy of Battlezone on PC CD-ROM.

October 1990 marked the birth of a revolution - the first 3D game ever. Now 18 years later, Activision releases a PC game every bit as revolutionary as the original.

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1960's and early 1970's. Battlezone combines the best features of current best selling strategy games with a futuristic 3D radar interface and seamless first person immersion to deliver an unprecedented gaming experience. Battlezone has already received critical acclaim achieving scores of 95% and 91% from PC Gamer and PC Format respectively.

To enter this competition dial the number below, answer the following question on line and leave your name and full address.

Q: What was the name of the comet seen last year visible with the naked eye?

Call 0930 563402

Holiday is based on two people sharing and must be taken by 27/03/98. Subject to availability. Battlezone is available from good computer game stockists.

Call cost 5p per minute or 25p. Winner picked at random after lines close 30 March 1998.

Usual independent newspaper rates apply. Editor's decision is final.

14/SCIENCE

The mind machine



Igor Aleksander: His pocket calculator is cleverer than he is, he says - but only in a very specific way

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Igor Aleksander has created a real-life successor to Hal. Charles Arthur hears how

IMAGINE a banana. What colour is it? Yellow, of course. Now try to form a picture of one that doesn't exist, that can't exist: a blue banana with red spots. Imagine that.

How did you do? If you found it hard, perhaps you ought to know that Igor Aleksander has a machine which can do that easily. When he asks it (in words) to produce an image of "banana" that is "blue with red spots", the image swams on to the screen in seconds.

This, says Professor Aleksander, is indicative that the computer has something which scientists and computer engineers have been struggling towards for more than 50 years: machine consciousness. Yes, the same thing that marked out Hal, the computer in 2001: A Space Odyssey; and the robots of Isaac Asimov's science fiction.

At the moment, this machine consciousness can only categorise and imagine things in a limited domain. It knows what two-dimensional images of cats, butterflies, and mice look like. It also knows what things that are red, yellow, blue, green, and indeed blue with red spots look like. Give it an image of something it has never seen before, and it will try to categorise it. Equally, ask it to picture something it has not seen, but has the "language" for - such as a blue cat - and it will.

That might not sound like a

lot. But it is actually an essential breakthrough, because, as Professor Aleksander points out, the ability to recognise "redness" - or any other sort of - is something that philosophers have long maintained is the province only of conscious beings. And now he has achieved it on a humble PC.

"Philosophers call it the 'qualia' - the essence, the quality - of a thing," he explains. "A red boat, a red cat, both have 'redness'. They say it can't simply be something in the neurons." Yet he can observe the part of the system which observes colour decide that something is red, or reddish, while other parts haven't decided what the object actually is.

That separation of processing is another key part of consciousness, he thinks. "It's an emergent property of neural centres which interact," he says. (An "emergent property" is behaviour which only becomes apparent when you have sufficiently many individual components acting at the same time. For instance, a hundred neurons gives you nothing; a hundred billion, a human being.)

Though Professor Aleksander has been researching this field of artificial intelligence for 30 years, this breakthrough by his team at Imperial College has

only been made in the past six months. The key, he says, lies in creating a set of neural networks complex enough that they can mimic the action of part of the human brain.

Neural networks are computer analogues of the neurons in our brains; they receive inputs from a number of sources, and, depending on what it is "taught" to recognise, produce a certain output. For example, a neuron

Professor Aleksander's team has produced the software equivalent of 250,000 neurons with four million connections. The advantage of his machine-based version is speed - "the neurons in our brain only fire about 100 times a second". Using a 200 mHz PC - with the processor "firing" 200 million times a second - leaves headroom for the programs necessary to create artificial neurons.

objects, in all sorts of colours - and even imagine them in impossible colours.

The discovery, he says, is that the essential element for consciousness is a feedback system between at least two such "modalities". In humans, we have five - at least - modalities. We call them senses.

In building his system, he says, "you end up with a virtual machine which becomes artificially conscious of its virtual world, the one that you expose it to in the machine. But you could easily move that into a robot."

Instead of showing the robot screen images, you could hook up a digital camera to its input. With sufficient education about the "names" of things it was seeing, you would develop a sentient robot. "It will develop a sense of self," Professor Aleksander says. "It can develop an internal representation of its own effect on the world."

One might argue that Professor Aleksander is cheating - that the machine is being given a language, and told what the answers are. But the words used for the objects are more for our convenience, so we can observe the system deciding something is red. The neural network has already determined what that something is; all it needs is a label to hang on

"The speed advantage lets us model things that go on in the brain even though the number of cells is smaller," he says.

The system he has set up is a combination of vision and linguistic representation. The "visual" network (a 64 by 64 grid on screen) is shown a picture; the "language" network is told that is a cat; the "pattern" network that it is red. After about an hour's tuition, it can recognise all sorts of cats and other

things.

By building neural networks up and interlinking them to create more and more complex feedback, you eventually produce a system whose rules are literally unknown. No person has programmed them. All you know is how it reacts.

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THEORETICALLY ...

So farewell then, cold fusion - or at least the search for patients. Almost exactly nice years after Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann claimed to have produced nuclear fusion in a test tube, the University of Utah Research Foundation has abandoned its pursuit of patients for the work. Everyone's heading the same way: Japan spent more than £12m trying to make cold fusion work, but gave up last year. Meanwhile the US Patent Office has continued to reject cold-fusion patent applications.

Pons and Fleischmann claimed in 1989 that their tabletop device was producing heat by nuclear reactions. A scramble to reproduce the experiment soon led to most people abandoning the attempt: they couldn't reproduce the results or find supporting evidence.

Was Homer Simpson helping? An "undetermined number" of the protective thermal



Archaeopteryx

flies on Space Shuttle Columbia will have to be replaced, after being ruined when the spacecraft was banged by a lifting sling during preparations for its launch next month. Engineers are checking to see whether anything under those tiles was damaged. There was "no immediate explanation" for the incident, said Nasa, but added that the 16 April lift-off date is still the target.

"Bioterrorists" really are very difficult to prevent: how do you know what that fellow with the test tube on the Underground is up to? A number of American cities are playing out drills in which they simulate what would happen during "bioweapon" attacks, according to New Scientist. New York has already simulated an anthrax attack, but found that the difficulty is that most doctors have never seen a case of the disease - so if it really happened, they wouldn't realize what they were up against.



Bushra Ahmed, PR and marketing Manager of Joe Bloggs, turnover £40m a year: 'I was crap at school and dying to work in the business.'

Photograph: Tom Finnie



From chairs to crocs
...every Monday, a quirky look at the week ahead

Power chairs

Couch potatoes of the world, rejoice! This week sees the launch of a revolutionary new power chair that allows you to zoom around the office all day without having to even stretch a leg. Disguised as an old office chair, this masterpiece of an invention has a motor attached to its base and a joystick for steering on the arm-rest. As well as being a helpful tool for the disabled and the lazy, the concept introduces a host of other useful possibilities ranging from bumper chairs to blind-folded staff relay races. And, at a mere £2,695 a chair, it shouldn't take much to convince the powers that be to invest in one for all.

Life on TV

Darwin might not have thought much of the slob who never gets out of a chair. But if you're sitting comfortably, switch on for an entire weekend devoted to Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. The BBC's "Evolution Weekend" will feature programmes such as the *Fossil Roadshow* by Peter Snow and an edited version of *Life on Earth*. And to reinforce the gravitas of the issue, the Beeb has invited celebrities from the arts, science, sport and entertainment to talk about the one animal that has inspired them. The swimmer Sharron Davies will be revealing her love affair with the dolphin, while comedian Norman Pace confesses his deep affinity with the crocodile.

Rural fair

If your liking's for more English forms of wildlife, join the Barbour and welly at *Country Living's* spring fair, running from Wednesday to Sunday where a host of craftsmen, cooks, decorators and gardeners, will be creating a working village for five days. The occasion is apparently designed to depict a walk through a Spring country garden and *The Archers* will even be staging two live performances. Organisers claim the fair "will provide a host of inspirational ideas for creating glorious gardens, designing imaginative interiors and finding rural retreats and holidays." — which must explain why they chose the Business and Design Centre in Islington, north London to host the event.

Spring time

For more lofty and intellectually edifying is an inspired new line up of daytime viewing due to kick off this week. The controversial American chat show host Jerry Springer is scheduled to begin a run of lunchtime shows on British TV. The former mayor of Cincinnati has ruffled the feathers of critics in America with his choice of risqué topics for the "real people" based shows. However, ITV, who will be broadcasting the new programmes, promises that titles like "I Cut Off My Manhood" and "My wife is Really A Guy," will be reserved for a late night slot and that the lunchtime programmes will be all in the best possible taste.

— Amanda Kelly



Secret Superwomen

Behind many of Britain's millionaire Asian businessmen, there are equally dynamic women. Yasmine Alibhai-Brown reports

THINK New Britain, youthful ambition, bathfuls of moeey and success and one name that comes to mind is Shami Ahmed, who at 16 left school to launch a thousand and more jeans and his own label, Joe Bloggs. Now, at 35, Ahmed's brand turns over £40m a year, he is internationally famous and a man with immense clout. For a while he had something of a cult following when he presented *Desh*, the Channel 4 series on how to get rich while you are still young.

But as Ahmed would be the first to admit, Joe Bloggs was not just his creation. There is a heroine too — his sister Bushra. She is practically unknown, but her input into the business has been crucial.

And Bushra is not unique. The success stories of millionaire Asian businessmen have become an urban legend. They even merit their own league table, to be announced this week at a glitzy dinner in London attended by Tony Blair. But behind many of them are women like Bushra, without whom it could not have been done.

Bushra, upbeat loud, self assured, Muslim, unmarried, ambitious as big as her Harley Davidson, is the PR and marketing manager of Joe Bloggs and has, she says, other "big plans" to get into the pop music industry. Bushra started learning the trade during infancy. This, and the way she injected energy and ideas into the business, is fairly typical, according to a research report published this month by the Roehampton Institute. It reveals for the first time the role of Asian

women in business, both as silent partners in the background and super-businesswomen in their own right.

Ask Bushra Ahmed if she recognises the fact that her brother has attracted all the attention and she doesn't even understand the question. She says that this was a family decision, and partly justified anyway because Shami is prepared to work every hour of every day, while the women have other needs.

The census figures show that among working women, Indian and Pakistani women are twice as likely as white women to be self-employed, and that at present there are more than 7,000 Indian women who run businesses with employees. Many now have lifestyles which *Hello!* would salute over. They include Parween Warsi MBE, winner of 17 business awards, who heads S & A Foods, a chilled and frozen food empire, with annual sales of £20m, which she started in her own kitchen only 10 years ago.

Also, the glamorous Meena Pathak, head of product development at the hugely successful Indian spice and sauces firm, Patak's. Meena was a Coca-Cola model in India when she agreed to an arranged marriage in Britain and joined an already flourishing family business. Then, success depended on the wide distribution of tried and tested recipes. Meena has injected evolution and change so that every year 24 new products are introduced and others retired.

Ten years ago,
Parween Warsi
(right) started a
food empire which
now has annual
sales of £20m

"I was crap at school," she says, "and I was dying to work in the business." By 15 she was the main buyer and had to persuade sexist men to deal with her instead of her father. "I admired my father. But also my mother, Saeeda, who is also very astute and is the wind beneath all our wings. Of course it was tough because we all had to chip in. But look where I am today."

Dr Spinder Dhalwal, author of the Roehampton report, understands this all too well. Now a senior lecturer in business at the

Institute, she too came here as a child from India and moved to Dunstable with her parents and three sisters, where a small grocery shop was duly set up. They lived upstairs and the parents worked night and day. There was no playtime, no teenage madness, not much going out.

And as in so many Asian families, higher education was also non-negotiable: "My dad insisted on us going to university. But I was still expected to go and help the business during my holidays and sometimes at weekends.

"We hear a lot about how badly treated women are in our communities, and some are, but there is also such a valuable bond between us. But that bond is break-



ing up and I feel the loss will be greater than the gain." This is mostly undisputed by the women I talked to, but there is a price to pay, says Zeenat Harnal. Married with a young daughter, she says that those around her are very supportive but adds: "Men cannot understand the choices women are forced to make and in the end society and the family will treat you differently because you are a woman."

She has drawn strong boundaries around her own ambitions to avoid, you suspect, upsetting the

balance and losing the support of those she loves. Her child is cared for by her mother, and when she is in India, by her mother-in-law. They love their role and reciprocal respect oil the wheels. Unlike many other women high-fliers, successful Asian women go in for a lot of conspicuous complimenting of their families as if to protect themselves against accusations of selfishness or (God forbid) feminism. Dhalwal feels, however, that while duty to family not something to be dismissed lightly, what is wholly unacceptable is the contributions made by Asian women have been rendered invisible by the community and the wider society.

"Asian women have worked twice as hard as the men in the family businesses. Because we are conditioned to think it is wrong for a woman or girl to show off, to describe their achievements, to want personal success. And me and their families simply expect female contributions, like it is their right."

For every Parween or Bushra who makes it, thousands more will be exploited by their own families. Many of the women in her report were petrified of talking to Dhalwal. These were the "hidden" women who do mundane, grinding work and have no control over the finances or anything else. And many now suffer from terrible guilt that they have not looked after their children as well as they might. For Surinder, now 46, who was forced to leave school at 14 to marry. What followed were hellishly hard years when money was short and she had to chop meat and do the dirty work in her husband's food shop while bringing up two small children and running a home upstairs. Now they have a clothes business which is doing well, but for Surinder the relief is

that she has ultimate control.

The next generation, says Davinder anxiously, are used to more western values of individual gratification. This might mean the collapse of the very ethos which has enabled this Asian business success to unfold in the first place. But for now, not only are many Asian women proving themselves in business, they might be indicating that the secret lies not in having it all, but being clever enough not to want it all.

Never disturb a woman in the middle of literary intercourse



DINAH HALL

IT'S OFTEN said that we are not a literary nation. I would dispute that. On the Tube last week I thought I had stumbled on an Underground book club — a man in his early twenties revisiting his teens with *Junk* by Melvyn Burgess was sitting next to an older woman reading *Of Mice and Men*; next to me was a man showing off his Foucault while two seats down someone too old for it to be an A-level text was half way through *Brave New World*. Another woman had folded over the cover of her book so it could have been that new book

on masochism — either that or she was a masochist and it was a Jeffrey Archer.

Opposite me a young girl immersed in *Animal Husbandry* did not look at all happy when the heavily tattooed man with a fistful of gold rings next to her tried to strike up a conversation. "Good that book, innit? I've just finished it." Poor man, I'm sure it was only a bit of literary intercourse he was after but he should know that women do not like to be disturbed in the middle of a book. At least two of our book club members admit to

carrying on reading while their husbands get on with their conjugal rights. Even if the book isn't any good. The joy of reading in flagrante is that it can be done in any position — but personally I find over his right hand shoulder the most comfortable...

AM VERY worried about my SLC6A4. This is only to be expected, I suppose, as SLC6A4 is the gene responsible for anxiety and pessimism — and I definitely got it. But not as bad as the 11-year-old. The other day he brought back a

medical form for me to sign — when it got to the question of whether he had a serious health problem, I momentarily hesitated, wondering whether the SLC6A4 counted, and he was immediately on panic alert.

This was final proof in his eyes that I have been concealing from him some terrible life-threatening condition. "Go on, write it down — I'll cover your eyes," he bravely declared. But at least it diverted him for a while from the long term worry of XF11: this is the asteroid that according to sci-

entists is going to narrowly miss the Earth. Not that we believe them. "So, that's it then," signed SLC6A4 junior, "I shall die when I die."

I FEEL a bit like the wicked fairy in *Sleeping Beauty* when it comes to dealing out genes to the children. I've given each of them a really nasty one — my moustache to the oldest (but I suppose he'll grow in to it) and my ankles to the youngest. I thought the eight-year-old had got away with only the charming bits — she can think herself lucky she's got my hus-

band's bottom (and there's always waxing if it turns out to be an exact copy later on). But then I heard her read out an essay in her class assembly and realised she had inherited the TFP (Tendency to Purple Prose) gene.

They had had to write a short piece on their favourite room and while others had chosen living rooms (because of the TV) and bedrooms (because of the TV), she had written an ode to the top bathroom. "I go there when I am sad and cry all by myself. Just me and my rat."

I could see the teachers exchanging "shall I call the social worker or will you?" glances, but I was captivated by the literary device of "just me and my rat" sprinkled at intervals throughout the piece — and literary device is just what it was because she never goes near the rat. But when she got to the bit about the bathroom being like heaven "or when I'm angry just like hell" the mother two seats down from me could contain herself no longer. "That child needs counselling," she muttered out of the corner of her mouth. Huh! Jealous, that's all.

THE INDEPENDENT

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A vote against racism in Europe

AT 10 o'clock this morning, 21 regional councillors in the south of France will decide whether or not a racist party makes one of the greatest democratic advances of postwar European history. The 21, who are members of the centre-right parties, have to choose between candidates for president of southern France's largest region, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. They could vote for Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the anti-immigrant National Front, or for the socialist.

It is a decision of great moment not just for France but for the whole of Europe because whatever they decide, the situation is a warning of the sinister forces which stand ready to exploit arrogant, bureaucratic and repressive European institutions in bad economic times.

If the councillors of Provence opt for Mr Le Pen, they will give the National Front its most prominent democratic platform. France's der of regional government, invented 15 years ago by President Mitterrand in order to try to decentralise the French state, is still weak and Mr Le Pen would have few powers. But his authority as President Le Pen, not of the whole of France but of one of its most populous regions, covering all the territory from Marseilles to Nice, would be positively baronial.

Even if the councillors draw back from the brink, their dilemma only dramatises the fact that the centre-right's defences against the National Front have been smashed. Since the regional elections a week ago, the centre-right parties have relied on National Front support to hold onto five regional presidencies. The principle of refusing to treat with racists has been breached and the centre-right is now fundamentally split between those who are prepared to make alliances with the National Front and those who are not.

This is the important point. There have been alliances between the centre-right and the far right before, but they were 10 years ago, when the centre-right was much stronger. Now it seems that the weakened coalition of Conservatives will re-divide into two groupings. One will refuse to deal with the National Front and continue to search for a leader who can appeal across the centre of public opinion. The other will try to co-opt the far right's 15 per cent of the vote, arguing that to do otherwise would be to hand power to the left for a generation.

Much could depend on which wing gains the upper hand. There has always been a racist fringe to European politics, although for most of the time since 1945 a combination of economic prosperity and high-mindedness on the part of political leaders has kept it marginalised.

In Britain, we should be grateful to the Conservative establishment for keeping racism unrespectable. Great was the obloquy heaped on Enoch Powell; his death reminded us that his "rivers of blood" speech was a spectacularly erroneous prediction – but also that this was partly because Ted Heath had no truck with it. And whatever the faults of the recent Tory administration it must be said that John Major showed the kind of leadership that matters when it came to refusing to compromise with racism.

It is not enough to congratulate ourselves, however, because the French warning should be heard throughout the European Union. One of the faults of French politics has been the devotion of leaders in Paris to the goal of European integration, especially the single currency, seemingly at the expense of pressing social problems at home, especially youth unemployment. As ever, the issues of unemployment, crime and immigration fuelled the National Front's strong showing a week ago – issues on which the conventional parties seemed to have little credible to say. In this context, preaching from central government about the evils of racism is bound to seem irrelevant. This is a prime example of how the European Union is unable to explain itself to, or gain the meaningful consent of, the peoples of Europe. As *The Independent* has argued repeatedly, Europe needs a better, more democratic constitution.

Alas the sceptic will exclaim triumphantly. Is it not the case that the only reason the French are in such a pickle is because of proportional representation? Well, it is certainly true that the National Front owes some of its electoral respectability to President Mitterrand's cynical attempts to divide the right, which included a tactical switch to a proportional system – which now remains only at regional level.

But racism is not something which can be designed out of the system. Whatever the system, it is still up to politicians to respond to the concerns of the voters and to demonstrate leadership. The real problem in France is the inability of national or local (or regional) leaders to convince hard-pressed middle to lower income voters that they are on their side. That is a problem which should be at the forefront of the minds of all Europe's leaders as they embark on the next stage of constructing the European Union.

Fat salaries in trainland

"TIME flies by when I'm the driver of a train,
And I ride on the footplate there and back again."

Time in Trumptonshire, and elsewhere, must fly even more quickly now that train drivers have the option of using those idle moments to consider when, how and where to spend their substantial salaries. As we report today, competition among private train companies has pushed salaries for experienced drivers up to £50,000 a year. Soon, controllers and beneficiaries of underpriced sales of public assets may not be the only fat persons to be found working for Connex, Stagecoach and the rest.

For this they have the new free market in the railway industry to thank. Neglect of training has pushed up the going rate for a proper train driver to way beyond the levels recently colonised by those other aristocrats of labour – plumbers – and given little boys new and far more concrete reasons to want to be members of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) when they grow up.



MILES
KINGTON

TODAY it's time for another extract from the lost Shakespearean play *The History of King Tony or New Labour's Lost*. Having defeated the Iory Army in battle, King Tony now has the task of pacifying the kingdom, keeping his own side loyal and spotting any conspiracies which might threaten his throne. We have reached the point where King Tony has entrusted the financial management of his kingdom to the capable but hugely ambitious Duke Gordon Brown.

In the Palace, at Westminster: Duke Gordon Brown is addressing the assembly on his plans for the nation.
Gordon Brown: In former years this land did rise and fall in constant cycles of unsteadiness, From boom to bust, from stop to go and back. Until our minds were dizzy with the motion, Like a blind ship upon a drunken ocean. No more of that! Our course shall now be steady, With mine the hand upon the country's tiller. Under my enduring stewardship, This land shall grow in strength and dignity, Till everyone shall have a job at last. And men in Sheffield not be forced to strip To earn enough to keep their wife and kids!

That reference do I make to show you all That I can keep in touch with common culture... Enter the Earl Hague with the remains of his army, attended by Gunner, Widdecombe, etc.
Hague: (aside) Hark how this jumped up Scotsman witters on Why, every Chancellor since the dawn of time Has said the same and then been shewn quite wrong.
Gordon Brown: From welfare to work shall be our battle cry! I shall not rest till every man and woman Has been unfeathered from the jobless queue And given some noble work to match his state.
Hague: (aside) Why, what he says is very true indeed.
Widdecombe: How so, my Lord?
Hague: How so, stout Widdecombe?
Why, see you not that this same Gordon Brown Will never rest or pause till he himself Has risen to the job he craves to have, The Premiership of this country, nothing less. The endless rise of this Duke Gordon Brown Will never cease till he's brought Tony down... Earl Hague and his cohorts slip away, followed by spies.
Duke Gordon Brown speaks on, unstoppable.
Gordon Brown: Turning now to diesel fuel, and wine...

King Tony: (interrupting) More of this anon. It's time to dine. Gordon Brown: But sire, I have not nearly finished yet. I have not put up tax on cigarettes, Nor said what I shall do with PEPs and TESSAs, Nor made my most informed financial guesses. I have not done my bit for unleaded fuel... King Tony: Listening to you, I feel I'm back at school. Uncomprehending while the master drones. Your corporation tax and single parent loans Have left me feeling dizzy, deaf and dumb.
Gordon Brown: Nay, sire, a simple child from school Could come and understand the hardest thing I say.
King Tony: Oh, would he now? In that case, let's away And test your theory in a real life school. 'Twixt you and children let there be a duel!
The scene is a school, where Duke Gordon Brown is endeavouring to explain his policies to the gathered pupils.
Gordon Brown: And so you see, the curve of annual borrowing Both intersect with income HERE and HERE...
King Tony: Come, come, dear Gordon Brown, let not the smell

Of rank statistics fright these innocent minds. The thing is very simple. We must forge A golden country for a brand new age! To you I say, fear not the future but behold Where youth goes boldly, while fear restrains the old! Together we shall build, and build we must! For what is just is fair, and fair is just!
First Journalist: (aside) This Tony talks a load of tosh, and yet they love it. They all believe his smile, not what he says.
Second Journalist: You Gordon has a dark and jowly look. He knows that all King Tony says is drivel. And cannot understand why he is loved, Nor yet why he himself is frowned upon.
First Journalist: A man who frowns and scowls like Gordon Brown Shall not by love, but force, secure a crown.
Second Journalist: Well said! That's very deep, or so I think.
First Journalist: I'm sick of this. Let's go and have a drink...
Some more extracts from Shakespeare's sensational *The History of King Tony* by and by...

16/COMMENT

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Walking the dog: evening on the deserted beaches of Black Rock Sands, near Porthmadog, North Wales.

Photograph: Steve Peake
A 9x12 print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171-293 2534

Help for self-harmers

AS A recovering "cutter", I was appalled at the feature "Why I have to harm myself" (24 February).

From my experience over 28 years of serious self-injury, and five years in "recovery" from it, I know this condition to be an addiction. It does not start out as one, but it becomes one, like any coping strategy. To facilitate such a strategy is at best misguided, and at worse dangerous; not least for the message it sends to those who are trying to learn better ways of coping.

Is there any effective treatment centre which would, as described in your article, permit a self-harmer – and in this category I include alcoholics, drug addicts and anorexics – to use their behaviour as a "fail-safe" for any longer than it takes to understand the reasons why? Most sufferers are desperate for help, not to minimise, but to stop, and be stopped.

According to your article, Sharon LeFeuvre is being enabled to carry on cutting by those who encourage her "workshops". She is not going to stop, because she has become her own "course material" – exhibiting scars in accident and emergency departments across the country, in the belief that she is "educating" the medical profession.

Twenty years ago I too experienced lack of understanding from some members of the medical profession. I also experienced great compassion and care from other members of the same profession. Frequently, and on reflection, what I perceived as hostility was simply a matter-of-fact response from a busy A&E team, usually late at night, dealing with what really was – to be blunt – unnecessary work.

Unlike Ms LeFeuvre, I neither looked for nor expected deep psychological insight from these people. Nor would it have helped me then if it had been available. What I did receive was the appropriate medical intervention dictated by my physical injuries.

Repeated self-injury is both aggressive and frightening to the onlooker. Many of the nursing staff were themselves traumatised by my

behaviour. They weren't "hostile", just horrified and shocked – a natural response on seeing grotesque mutilation.

You cannot force "understanding" down peoples' throats. More often than not their natural reaction is the salutary lesson which eventually brings us back to reality.

NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED

Moving the King's Library

THOSE persons calling for the reversal of the move by the British Library to St Pancras of the books comprising the King's Library (report, 19 March) fail to take into account the well-being of this great collection.

The Sainsbury-designed rooms at the British Museum are very grand and beautiful, but they lack the proper environmental conditions without which the books they were designed to house would in time literally disintegrate.

Account also needs to be taken of

the needs and working methods of

those who use a modern research library. One of the many benefits of the new St Pancras building is that it unites historic collections, of which the King's Library is but one, in good environmental conditions, under one roof.

Establishing the location of a book on a computerised catalogue is all very well, but a researcher's work

would be considerably hampered by

the need to trawl back and forth

across London between separate

buildings housing the range of ref-

erences being consulted.

The glass King's Library tower at

St Pancras is a fitting home for the

collection. It forms the heart of a

building which is being acclaimed for

its humanity, its sense of space, and

the high quality of its construction.

No doubt it will come to be as great-

ly loved as the Bloomsbury building

is today. Your readers might bear in

mind that Sainsbury's British Museum

building was vilified when it was

opened 167 years ago.

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Fees for students

YOUR article on tuition fees "Students staying at home to save money" (19 March) implies that students will have to pay £1,000 towards the cost of their course. Only a third will be faced with this fee. Poorer students will pay nothing and the remaining third only a proportion.

The new loan scheme means no one will pay any more for the total of maintenance and fees during their studies than they do now. Repayments of cheap-rate loans will be after they graduate, according to their own incomes.

DIANA WARWICK
Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
London WC1

At the end of useful life

THE letters about "waiting to die" (19 March) omitted one important point: that what happens to the elderly is a relative question, not an absolute one concerning only them. As an 83-year-old widower, I have finished my useful – and worthwhile – life in spite of being lucky still very fit and able to look after myself. But I am deaf, easily tired and confused, and so unable to do even unpaid se-

rvices.

I have no desire to linger on once I get ill, taking up the time of doctors and nurses which should be available to younger people with much of their useful lives before them. So I

have joined the Voluntary Eu-

thanasia Society, and carry their card. This makes it clear that no effort should be made to keep me alive if I have a serious accident or fall seriously ill. I believe many people of my age feel the same.

JOHN WRIGHT
West Wittering, West Sussex

A small matter...

IT'S A small thing, I know, but can I put matters straight on the subject of the actor Ian Holm's penis? In an interview with your paper (Eye, 19 March), he again claims – as in other recent interviews – that I wrote of his nude scene in *King Lear*: "I fail to see how Mr Holm could have possibly fathered three children with a member that size."

Apart from being biological nonsense, no such line ever appeared under my name. In a piece supposed to be about the bravery of actors playing naked, I quoted a member of the audience expressing surprise after the storm scene that Mr Holm had had three wives. Perhaps this is biological nonsense too, but it is a general prejudice and was what the man said.

Incidentally, if I were Mr Holm's spin doctor, or wife, I'd advise him that the comment would be completely forgotten by now if he didn't keep dragging it up (inaccurately) in every interview.

MARK LAWSON
The Guardian
London EC1

International art

"THE National Gallery" is a quirky name for a collection containing such a minuscule number of national artists. More than half the cost of renovating the recently reopened rooms in the gallery has come from France, and the rooms themselves will show "masterpieces from France and the Netherlands" (report, 19 March).

Is it not time to rename this great institution "The International Gallery"?

ROB WOOD
London N5

Mardi Gra: a clue

SO the FBI think that "Mardi Gra" bomber has been ill-treated by a bank? (report, 19 March) That really narrows it down.

JOHN ROZIER
Hanley Castle, Worcestershire

Northern Ireland talks have reached the endgame, but stalemate is all too likely



DAVID
McKITTRICK
THE OBSTACLES
TO AGREEMENT

Today the Northern Ireland talks enter their endgame, Tony Blair and Mo Mowlam having decreed, and stuck to, a timetable which first hardly anyone believed in.

The parties are required to reach agreement by Good Friday, April 10. If they manage that, referendums will be held on May 22, north and south, to endorse the agreed deal: that is the plan. The talks process might yet end in success; but if it does, it will do so against the prevailing tides, against a background of what can only be described as communal distaste.

Even the Community Relations Council, normally the most determinedly upbeat of quangos, speaks gloomily of "a depressingly inexorable decline in respect for difference." If the process works, in other words, it will happen not from love but on the basis of cold-eyed self-interest.

The desire for peace among almost everyone in Northern Ireland is obvious, but so too are the vast reservoirs, fully-stocked and constantly replenished, of mistrust and indeed fear. This means that there are powerful factors working for peace but also powerful and unmistakable reasons to be pessimistic. Few today would put the chances of success in the talks at higher than 50-50.

Most of the obstacles to peace are well-known but there is one particular issue, not much discussed outside Ireland, which has the capacity to de-rail the whole enterprise. That is the nationalist attitude towards the new Belfast assembly which, it seems, will be an integral part of any new arrangement. The standard description of Unionism, with which Unionists are by now mightily fed up, is that it is intrinsically and incurably insecure. That description is in fact as accurate as ever but there has suddenly been a marked increase of jitters on the nationalist side. There is, for the moment at least, almost parity of insecurity.

Northern nationalists have in recent years become used to



Your move: Final touches being put to Mo Mowlam, a knight on the political chessboard at 'It's Your Move', an exhibition at Liberty Hall, Dublin. Photograph: Matt Kavanagh

winning. Politically, John Hume and Gerry Adams have set the agenda, winning friends and influencing people worldwide and stirring the notion of an inclusive peace process. The Irish government, and Washington, are now accepted players in the Northern Ireland game.

A northern nationalist, Mary McAleese, has become president of the Republic. Northern Ireland's 18 MPs now include five nationalists, among them Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. The Lord Mayor of Belfast is one of John Hume's men. Changing demographics mean that perhaps 45 per cent of the population is Catholic. The change also extends to social mobility, the growing Catholic middle-class achieving access to many important levers of public sector power. Catholics make up 55 per cent of undergraduates at Queen's University, Belfast; the future looks greener and greener.

The nationalist dilemma is that the present three-stranded approach, which was in fact conceived years ago by John Hume, calls for a new assembly. The three strands are about connecting Belfast, London and Dublin in new arrangements.

Nationalists instinctively approve of closer London-Dublin links, implying as they do a permanent role for Dublin in Northern Ireland affairs. They also axiomatically approve of proposals for new north-south institutions, seeing these as tangible expressions of their Irishness. But an assembly is a different matter, reawakening fears as it has the deep-seated fears of a return to what used to be termed the nationalist nightmare.

It is clear that both governments envisage an assembly that would be absolutely fettered with safeguards and mechanisms, such as weighted majorities and requirements for consensual decision-making. These would be specifically designed to ensure that any new system would function through cooperation and the sharing of power, and emphatically not on the basis of a return to Protestant majority rule.

Yet whatever the safeguards, any new assembly would have a Unionist majority and hence a Unionist chief executive, and the largest party would be the Ulster Unionists. More than one gathering of Catholics

has recently been stunned into appalled silence with the leading question, "Well, how do you fancy David Trimble as your new prime minister?"

Part of the new anxiety is a desire not to have their advances clawed back. A great part is in fact a nationalist judgment on political Unionism; and that judgment, which is pretty much unanimous, is that nationalists do not trust Unionist leaders one inch.

It is very much a given that Catholics do not believe for an instant that Rev Ian Paisley is now, or would ever be, in the business of giving them a fair crack of the whip. His politics, like his religion, is unabashedly anti-Catholic, his speeches larded with attacks on Popes and priests: there is no give there. He is against the negotiations on principle, and is busy organising anti-talks rallies around Northern Ireland. To date these have not been a great success, but it can never be forgotten that he can command one-third or more of the Unionist vote, and that he is superb at electorating.

The Ulster Unionists are a different matter. David Trimble,

since taking over as leader in September 1995, has been an innovator on many fronts. He has refused all requests – most recently from President Clinton just last week – to meet Gerry Adams face to face, but he has led his party into the talks, regularly met the Irish government, and become a familiar face in Washington.

In doing so he has travelled into territory where no previous Unionist leader ever ventured, thus helping ensure that the Unionist case has not gone by default. But for all his breaking of new ground he has conspicuously not won the hearts and minds or even the trust, of nationalists. This is mainly because of his identification with Drumcree, the annually catastrophic Orange march in his Upper Bann constituency, which many Orangemen see as an indispensable assertion that the nationalist advances of recent years have their limits. Nationalists take Drumcree as an annual display of sectarian triumphalism, and as a recurring lesson that the Unionism of David Trimble is not offering fair play to them.

A striking feature of the

scribes as minimalist. The Unionist party's preferred assembly would have no legislative powers: it would not even have a cabinet or executive at its head. Instead, the whole 90-member assembly would decide things in the manner of a local council, all of its members voting on everything. While this would give a Unionist majority a possibly decisive say, it would not give them many positive powers to wield.

There is a widely-held belief that the generality of Protestants is not as uniformly hardline as the Unionist political classes. There is a fair bit of anecdotal evidence to support this theory, but it would be a gigantic risk for any government to attempt to appeal to the Protestant community over the heads of its political representatives; and this government has decided not to. If there is no agreement, there will be no referendums.

The Protestant grassroots mind is difficult to read. Unionists vote for five separate Unionist parties. There is apathy on a surprising scale, large numbers no longer bothering to vote, figuring probably that there is little they can do to stem the steady march of Anglo-Irish. "Unionists can be so mauldin, so defeatist," a Belfast academic said sadly last week. "They have such a lack of self-confidence."

There is uncertainty and fear, as always; there is also a deep desire for peace, though this is accompanied by the stipulation that it should not be peace at any political price. Despite Drumcree, there is no universal Unionist urge to return to some form of the old domination: most don't want it, others think it is just not on. But there is little belief in the proposition that a whole new dispensation can be constructed which make the union with Britain more secure than it is now.

There is, therefore, no single clear message being transmitted from the grassroots to the leaders of Unionism; and within that leadership itself there is no clear opinion about whether a new deal is either desirable or attainable. Some analysts believe the most telling factor in the way of agreement is that, whatever David Trimble's personal inclinations, he cannot rely on his party to follow him into a new dispensation.

This, together with the difficulties for nationalism, means that this final session of talks is attended with more hope than firm confidence that a historic new compact is in prospect.

Jackie Brown is right. The only way out is to take a chance



BOYD
TONKIN
THE ONE-SHOT
SOCIETY

Last week, a cunning, feisty forty-something, name of Brown, walked away with a fat wad of other people's money to the cheers of the assembled press. No, not Gordon: Jackie. As the Chancellor ushered us into his paradise of toil-for-all, the British opening of Quentin Tarantino's new film, *Jackie Brown*, directed us to the emergency exit.

Work – any work – confers dignity and value, runs the social-democratic mantra of our times. If that labour can be clean, indoors, endowed with a white collar and open to women as easily – or more easily – than men (this litany goes on), so much the better. In his surprisingly tender and affecting film, the scabrous wonderland of Hollywood tells another tale. He portrays a middle-aged woman stripped of respect and ground down by the burden

of professional nice ness who brilliantly takes the single chance she gets to dump the job, the pose – and the fixed smile – for ever.

It strikes a resounding chord, even if you have no plans to stage a heist that relieves a small-time arms smuggler of his ill-gotten loot. The rest of us simply play our legalised numbers racket (70 per cent of British adults buy Lottery tickets). Or else we cash in building-society windfalls, and hope for a plump redundancy pay-off. Meanwhile, the more up-market gambler can turn share-options liquid or pick up some battered hotel for a song and flog it for half-a-million once the area has up and come.

Even the hi-tech entrepreneurs of recent years have grown rich not from long-term management but from selling their breakthroughs in software or pharmaceuticals on to global firms.

Forget the long-haul bourgeois prudence exfoliated by Brown (G). Emotionally, we now live in the one-shot society so cannily exploited by Brown (J).

Played with a mesmerising slow-burn strength by the former blaxploitation star Pam Grier, Jackie Brown is a flight attendant on the airline from hell. She shuttles pointlessly between LA and Mexico for a salary of \$16,000 "with retirement benefits". At 44, time and hope are running out, "and I've been waitin' on people now almost 20 years". In the credit sequence, her commanding pride and poise on the airport travelator give way to the flustered hurry of the wage-slave as she runs to catch her flight. Before our eyes, the princess turns back into a pauper.

Later, a Federal agent taunts her

with a sneer that will open the wounds of less-than-youthful drudges everywhere: "Didn't exactly set the world on fire, did ya, Jackie?" Eventually, she does, thanks to the protocols of Hollywood wish-fulfilment. But Tarantino's take on the mortifying dead-end that looms in most service-sector "careers" is bleakly convincing. These jobs ("McJobs" as the writer Douglas Coupland labelled them) don't develop and they don't improve. Some one younger and cheaper can always do them just as well. They can deteriorate, of course, as managers crank up the expected output in a sinister form of assembly-line psychology.

Recent reports of epidemic stress among the telephone skivvies of the banking and insurance business yield a dismaying glimpse into the future of low-grade, labour-intensive work. At least the horny hands of rustbelt factories were permitted their stroppy moments of insubordination. In the new mills of finance, your mental disposition needs to be as neat and tidy as your clothes.

Still, this must be preferable to the dole or fretting at home? No one would consciously dispute that. Yet the prevalence of gambling culture at every level of society – from elderly pools addicts to yuppie real-estate investors – shows how shaky is our faith in the postwar ideal of a rung-to-rung career, from apprenticeship to carriage-clock. The market pressures that have flattened, downsized and destabilised workplaces in the West have bred a silent resistance. In place of the outlaw strike, we dissent invisibly in dreams and plans for exit strategies.

At the simplest level, the Lottery beckons from every corner shop. But each trade boasts its version of the Jackie Brown coup. To us poor hacks, of course, it often takes the form of idle fantasies about six-figure advances for bestselling books. It can happen, once in a blue moon (he can happen, once in a blue moon).

Yet this charting of escape-routes looms larger in the collective mind than it should, if you believe we have entered a sustainable long boom. Whatever the Treasury forecasters claim, many of us plainly don't. Plenty of voters have privately begun to anticipate the Millennium Recession of 2000. Of course, traditional peasant wisdom everywhere has never trusted that the good times will go on rolling. The difference now is that we don't board; we punt. And we gamble for an exit on the basis that even employment may offer nothing more than the corrosive monotony of Jackie Brown's shuttle. The future of work no longer glows; it grinds.

Hence sevco times as many Britons play the Lottery as bother to attend a Christian church. Time-travellers from Imperial Rome would instantly spot where our allegiance lay. They would identify the ruling deity as the goddess Fortuna, with a few declining Middle Eastern cults still worshipped on the side.

Ordinary toilers have paid close attention to the casino capitalism of the past decades, with its roulette spin of one-off riches for the few and sudden wipe-outs for entire communities. We have watched, marked and inwardly digested its bitter lessons. And, as always, popular culture will register its impact more sharply than the guarded responses given to pollsters and focus-groups. Perhaps the rune-readers at the Treasury should spend less time with computer-generated models and more time at the movies. As a small start, someone could take Gordon Brown to *Jackie Brown*.

Tube carriages are still awash, I note, with Bridget Jones's followers. A few people do hit the Lottery jackpot. And some home-owners really can bore their dinner guests rigid with accurate reports of triple-digit percentage gains.



Tube carriages are still awash, I note, with Bridget Jones's followers. A few people do hit the Lottery jackpot. And some home-owners really can bore their dinner guests rigid with accurate reports of triple-digit percentage gains.



£10 buys a chain cutter

He's chained up through his sensitive nose and made to walk on red hot plates, whilst the back of his legs are hit in time to music. Onlookers taunt him and force him to drink beer. Why? Because they're teaching him to dance! for tourists who pay to watch his agonising waltz.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) rescues 'dancing bears' and takes them to sanctuaries where they can be free of pain and suffering. But we can't carry out our life-saving work without the support of people like you. Your gift of just £10, or whatever you can afford, will help cut the chains of innocent animals. So please send your donation today. He's counting on you.

Yes, I want to cut the chains!

Please fill in your details below.

Name _____ Postcode _____

Address _____

I enclose my donation of £_____

(Please make cheques payable to WSPA or fill in your credit card details below.)

Visa/MasterCard/Switch/BureauCard/GAF CharityCard _____

Card No. _____ Expiry date _____ / _____ Signature _____

If using Switch, please use the number printed in the middle of your card.

Tick here if you would like a free information pack.

Please send this completed form and your donation to: WSPA, Dept AL 541, Freepost NP2604, Northampton, NN9 6BR. No stamp is needed. THANK YOU.

Ref: Drury No. 26203

WSPA
World Society for the Protection of Animals

Galina Ulanova

GALINA ULANOVA was the greatest ballerina of her time. Her special magnetism was a physical and spiritual beauty; an infinite power to transmit sensitive feelings and an infinite facility to express subtle shades of movement. Her bewitching artistry and histrionic genius enabled her to give performances of aesthetic enchantment. Such was her power on stage that she could reduce her audience to a state of hysteria.

She was born in St Petersburg in 1910. From the beginning, the opera house was her home. Her father, Sergei Ulanov, was artist-reisseur; her mother, Maria Romanova, solo dancer and teacher, both with the Imperial Ballet. At first she rebelled at the thought of following in her parents' footsteps, but at an impressionable age the Soviet Revolution occurred and she became aware of a new order and of the fear, distress and poverty in the world outside.

Her parents were often touring so she was placed in the state ballet school as a boarder. She spoke of the cold and hunger of the time and the hardness of the training with Agrippina Vaganova. Her happiest recollections were of visits to the old character-dancer-mime, Alexander Shiraiev, who kept a tray of sweets for the children's delight.

She learned early to accept her destiny, yet there was something of the rebel in her nature. She sought freedom and loved the country. The happiest years, she recalled, were summers on Lake Seligare, sailing a dinghy, with her schoolgirl companion, Tatiana Vecheslova.

As a teenager in the Leningrad Choreographic School, she was boisterous and capricious, and liked to dance boys' parts. Physically robust, she was thought not ideally proportioned for a ballerina, but in her development she refined and refined, contriving such grace and poise in her movement that the beholder scarce dwelt upon her physique, but was transported by the lightness and elegance that came from her soul.

Her graduation in 1928 began with the *pas de deux* from *Chopiniana* and *The Nutcracker* and Princess Flora from *The Sleeping Beauty*. The following year, under the tutelage of Vaganova, she danced Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* and her exceptional qualities were recognised. There followed a period of intense assimilation of leading roles in *Le Corsaire*, *The Ice-Maidens*, *The Age of Gold*, *Raymonda* and other parts that cultivated her virtuosity.

While Fedor Lopukov was artistic director at the Kirov, he took a special interest in her development. He had recognised

her rare potential when she was in the school. "She has a secret hidden in her soul," he once said.

In 1932, after diverse parts in *The Flames of Paris* and *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, she attempted her first *Giselle*. Vaganova had originally cast her as Myrtille. Fortunately, Yelena Liukom, the first prima-ballerina of Soviet Ballet, and a revered interpreter of *Giselle*, saw at once that it was Ulanova's part and coached her for her debut in the Ponomaryov production after Petipa.

During the 1930s, she enlarged her repertoire of the classics and included some contemporary works creating roles conceived by the leading ballet masters of the day, Vainonen, Goltszhevsky, Zakharov, Lopukov and Lavrovsky; she also danced with numerous partners, Yuri Kondratov, Konstantin Sergeyev (with whom she fell in love), Vladimir Preobrazhensky, Alexie Yermolayev, Mikhail Gabovich, Yuri Zhdanov and Nikolai Fadeyevich. All were brilliant dance artists of fine masculine calibre who had to bow the knee to her fastidious perfection of perfection.

In the maelstrom of ballet politics it would seem that Ulanova's guardian angel was always at hand. In 1932 when Leonid Lavrovsky replaced Lopukov as artistic director, she lost a valued friend but gained a new one. Her pursuit of perfection endeared her to Lavrovsky and a most fruitful collaboration ensued.

It might have been otherwise. Ulanova was a product of her mother's teaching which did not endear her to Vaganova. Vaganova had a penchant for strong legs and was inclined to force Ulanova, precipitating an injury to her ankles which were slender and delicately formed. This led to some friction.

Vaganova favoured her own pupils, Marina Semyonova, a tall exquisite dancer, and Natalia Dudinskaya, who was petite and technically invincible, but neither had the divine affluence of Ulanova. Ulanova was sustained by her close working relationship with the choreographers Lavrovsky and Roslavtav Zakharov.

In 1933 she appeared in a new production of *Swan Lake* by Vaganova; in 1934 she danced Masha in *The Nutcracker*, but the outstanding event of that year was Zakharov's production of Astafiev's *The Fountain of Bakchisarai* based on Pushkin's epic poem, in which she danced the tragic part of Maria—one of her greatest portrayals. In 1935 she danced Diana in Vaganova's new version of *Esmeralda* and in 1936 she took the part of Korali in *Lost Illusions* based on



Grace and poetry: Ulanova (right) with Vladimir Preobrazhensky in *The Stone Flower*

Photograph: John Gregory Collection

Balzac's novel, another Astafiev ballet choreographed by Zakharov, which further extended her dramatic range.

During the next two years the ballet of *Romeo and Juliet* was being conceived by Lavrovsky to the specially commissioned music of Serge Prokofiev. At the first rehearsals the dancers had great difficulty with the complex symphonic music, and Lavrovsky had problems in adapting the score. Prokofiev was called on to make revisions, and at one stage threatened abandonment. There were considerable delays. In the meantime Ulanova appeared in the name-part in a new production of *Raymonda* by Vasily Vainonen. Despite back-stage contretemps she was established as the brightest star in the Kirov galaxy. Her artistry was unsurpassable and she was meticulous in everything she undertook.

In addition to her natural talent, she possessed a fine intellect which enabled her to study her roles in depth, and to organise her life so as to conserve energy. After taxying performance, in order to return to earth from emotional heights, she would spend time tidying her dressing-room, putting her shoes in order, arranging flowers, and clothes and make-up.

so that when she left the theatre everything was in order and ready for her next performance.

The monumental produc-

tion of *Romeo and Juliet* was a long time in the melting-pot; first with Prokofiev's unwillingness to have his music butchered to serve the needs of the libretto, and with Ulanova's preoccupation with her Shakespearean studies. In the event, it was premiered in January 1940 on the eve of war with Germany, and then put into cold storage until 1944, by which time both she and it were acquired by the Bolshoi.

The war came at a crucial time in Ulanova's career. Fleeting from Leningrad she danced Nila in a new production of *La Bayadère* at the Bolshoi and was lauded with honours, state prizes and medals; during those terrible years she also danced with the Kirov in Perm (then called Molotov) and with the Kazakh State Ballet in Alma-Ata, devoting much time to dancing for troops on various fronts and for political leaders.

Ulanova would never discuss politics. She considered herself a servant of the state, but one apart. Undoubtedly she was protected from the top. She kept herself aloof, and during her greatest fame was scarcely approachable without an official permit from the KGB. As an artist, she was a product of the Soviet system. The audiences before her time had been aristocrats and socialites. "Our audiences", she once said, "are

ordinary people". And she became the Queen of Soviet Culture, a part she played with regal dignity.

In 1944 she returned, not to the Kirov, but to the Bolshoi. The powers that be wanted to establish the supremacy of the Bolshoi over the Kirov. From the beginning of the Soviet regime political power had been transferred from Petrograd to Moscow, and it was appropriate that the arts should follow suit. The finest artists were collected from the length and breadth of the empire to make the Bolshoi ensemble the greatest in the world. Ulanova accepted the commands of the hierarchy. It was to the greater glory of her art which called for a larger frame than the Kirov could provide.

Her debut on 23 January as

Prima Ballerina was in the role of Maria in *The Fountain of Bakchisarai* and on 30 August the same year, she renewed her acquaintance with *Giselle* in Lavrovsky's poetic production. Ulanova became his brightest jewel. Referring to her return the part, she said:

"It was a ballet that won my heart. When I returned to it, it was like meeting an old friend and discovering new and finer qualities. My *Giselle* is a young carefree girl in love, convinced of her happiness, she experiences great tragedy and the end develops into the image of a tragic woman with a suffering heart—it tried to conjure this image."

She was awarded the Stalin Prize and Medal "for valiant labour in the Patriotic War" and a Medal "for the defence of Leningrad". Not until 1946 did Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* take the stage. It was hailed as a masterpiece and won another Stalin Prize for Ulanova. Her interpretation of *Juliet* had ripened and brought to the full her histrionic powers, and she was supported by the most brilliant cast ever assembled on one stage. It was, perhaps, her greatest triumph.

The eventual unprecedented success of *Romeo and Juliet* prompted Prokofiev to propose another ballet for her.

What great heroine from history would she like to create? Ulanova surprised him by choosing a fairy tale heroine—Cinderella. It provided her with a delightful ingenue role which she danced with exquisite charm. (In 1954, she appeared as Katerina in his *The Stone Flower*, produced by Lavrovsky.)

In 1948 she again danced

Swan Lake, and in 1949 she ap-

peared as Parashka, a slave

dancer, in *The Bronze Horseman* (Gliere) produced by Zakharov,

and as Tao Hua in *Red Poppy* (Gliere) in a new production by Lavrovsky.

By now, the provinces were clamouring to see the great dancer, and dur-

ing 1948 she toured with the

company, returning briefly to Leningrad, and thence to Kiev, Tallin and Minsk. Windows on Europe were opening. In 1949 the Bolshoi visited Hungary and Czechoslovakia and the following year, Italy.

By now Ulanova's fame had penetrated even to the Far East and in 1950 a most remarkable tour of China ensued. The acclaim was sensational and unprecedented.

In 1954 the world press was

present at a remarkable season in East Berlin. The Cold War was still raging but the artistry of Ulanova and the dancers of the Bolshoi triumphed over all barriers. In 1956, after much diplomatic activity the long awaited visit to Covent Garden took place. Problems with a dock strike delayed the arrival of the scenery; the company's fog-bound plane was re-routed to arrive at Manton RAF station, instead of Heathrow. Ulanova refused to disembark until official permission had been received from Moscow. The company was held in thrall for a few uneasy hours, but in the end art triumphed over politics. The season was sold out before the curtain rose on the first performance and queues of people lay all night in the streets of Covent Garden in the hope of obtaining a ticket.

London saw Ulanova in three of her greatest roles: *Giselle*, *Juliet* and *Maria*. At additional performances at the Davis Theatre, Croydon, some fascinating *Divertissements* were presented and Ulanova danced her rendering of *The Dying Swan*. Films were made but they give little impression of the reality of her performances. Her power came from the fact that she lived the role she was playing. She was totally immersed and concentrated and the better she was never able to instill in them the unique artistry that was hers alone. For some years in the 1960s and 1970s, she became president of the jury at the biennial Varvia International Competition and her authority did much to preserve the integrity of that organisation from whose portals have issued many of the leading dancers of today.

At these competitions she sat next to Arnold Haskell, the doyen of English critics, who many years before had written, "Her beauty—and to me she is infinitely beautiful—is beauty of character and intelligence, a positive nobility that has nothing to do with the accepted classical canons. It is as truly Russian as Pushkin or Tolstoy." They became firm friends.

Today no artist of her stature exists. Galina Ulanova's exquisite art could only be achieved in a regime where the profit motive did not exist, where material cost was not considered, and where the artist's dedication was total.

John Gregory

Galina Sergeyevna Ulanova, ballerina; born St Petersburg 8 January 1910; ballerina, Kirov Ballet 1928-43; prima ballerina, Bolshoi Ballet 1944-61; professor and coach with the Bolshoi Ballet 1961-98; died Moscow 21 March 1998.

• John Gregory died 27 October 1998

Ulanova seemed a reincarnation of Taglioni with her superb ethereal motion, of Elsler with her astonishing vivacity and precision, of the matchless arabesques and lightness of Pavlova, of Karsavina's admirable technique and dramatic expression. All the great women dancers of the past were embodied in her form.

Curiously, in her maturity

Ulanova preferred to participate in the male class of Asaf

Messerer, one of the Bolshoi's

en times under Scoular). Cardiff were accustomed to qualifying for the European Cup Winners' Cup, and in 1967/68 they reached the semi-finals, where they lost 4-3 on aggregate to SV Hamburg. That stands as the highlight of the Scoular reign, though he built an enterprising side which came close to promotion 1970/71.

However, they fell away dramatically over the two subsequent terms, culminating in the manager's dismissal in November 1973. After that he scouted for Aston Villa and Wolves, managed Fourth Division Newport County for a year, then scouted again, for Swansea City and Newcastle. Outside the game, he worked as a representative for a chemical firm and ran a guest house in Cardiff before retiring to live near the city.

In his final years Jimmy Scoular was severely incapacitated by illness, a poignant end to a vibrantly active life.

Ivan Ponting

James Scoular, footballer and manager; born Livingston Station, West Lothian 11 January 1925; played for Portsmouth 1945-53, Newcastle United 1953-61; Bradford Park Avenue 1961-64; capped 9 times by Scotland 1951-52; managed Bradford Park Avenue 1961-64, Cardiff City 1964-73, Newport County 1976-77; married (three daughters); died Cardiff 19 March 1998.

• James Scoular died 19 March 1998

Scoular continued to play

into his fortieth year, laying aside his boots in February

1964, three months before his

Yorkshire sojourn terminated

with the sack. His sterling efforts

had abhorred him as a dirty

and so-and-so during his Port-

smouth days, but now they de-

scribed him as "robust but fair",

which might have been a tad euphemistic but nevertheless, was pretty much the truth.

Thereafter Scoular remained

a cornerstone of United's team

for the rest of the decade, not

departing until he was 36 in Janu-

ary 1961, when he joined

Fourth Division Bradford Park

Avenue as player-manager for

a nominal £1,500. Only four

months later he tasted success,

leading his new charges to pro-

motion to the Third but sadly,

after one season of apparent

consolidation, they returned to

the basement in 1970/71.

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• Ivan Ponting died 19 March 1998

not within the zero-rating pro-

visions for food in Sched 8,

Group 1, item 1 of the Value

Added Tax Act 1994, which by

note (3) excluded supplies "in

the course of catering". Cater-

Brown's AIM reforms could lead investors astray

WEEK AHEAD



PETER THAL LARSEN

IN A throwaway line in last week's Budget, Gordon Brown announced a series of changes that will have a profound effect on how private investors approach the Alternative Investment Market.

The measures, which abolish tax breaks for established AIM companies but increase them for small start-up firms, are intended to divert the cash coming into the market to the firms that need it most.

Some have been sufficiently surprised by the changes to suggest that they might prompt the collapse of the Stock Exchange's junior market, which was set up to cater for small start-up companies, well before its third birthday.

In fact, the toddler looks set to survive for a while longer. However, there is a real risk that the changes could tempt investors away from good investments into

poor ones, simply because of the tax breaks on offer.

In another twist, the Chancellor delayed the changes so they do not come into force until the tax year ends in a fortnight's time. So stockbrokers are on standby for a flurry of activity as punters take advantage of the existing tax breaks while they still can. Once again, the risk is that investors pay over the odds to take advantage of the tax breaks and get their fingers burned.

The most far-reaching change is the abolition of reinvestment relief. This tax break, which was introduced to encourage investors into the AIM market when it was set up, allows shareholders to avoid capital gains tax as long as they reinvest the proceeds of their investment in a qualifying AIM company. At the moment, about half the companies on the exchange qualify.

All well and good. But what happens when the shares start trading? Suddenly, they are no longer eligible for tax relief. And that

This change applies to all quoted companies. To cushion the blow, however, the Chancellor decided that reinvestment relief would still be available for companies that are coming to the market, provided they are below a certain size. As an extra bonus; investors in these firms will also qualify for 20 per cent tax relief under the enterprise investment scheme.

The numbers are compelling. For example, assume you sold some shares with a £10,000 capital gain. Put the proceeds into one of the qualifying AIM new issues, and you save yourself a CGT bill of £4,000. What's more, you then get a tax rebate of £2,000. So you have effectively paid just £4,000 for an investment worth £10,000.

All well and good. But what happens when the shares start trading? Suddenly, they are no longer eligible for tax relief. And that means that other investors may not want to pay the same price that you paid and the shares could slide.

The simple lesson is that if you need a big tax break to be encouraged to invest in a share, you're probably going to get burned.

The same applies to buying shares before the changes come into force on 6 April. Investors in these firms will also qualify for 20 per cent tax relief under the enterprise investment scheme.

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Douglas Hall will resign, or whether the scandal will prompt the company's three non-executive directors to hand in their notice. Analysts expect pre-tax profits of £8.5m.

Housebuilders will get

plenty of attention this week as Barratt Developments and Beazer report their half-year figures on Wednesday and Thursday respectively. Analysts will be asking the two to repeat earlier positive comments from other players. Barratt is expected to report profits of £30.9m, up from £24.8m in the previous year, while Beazer should come in with £30.5m, compared to £23.8m.

The glare of publicity on

Newcastle United will intensify tomorrow as the football club releases its first set of half-year results since flotation. Following a new string of allegations over the weekend, investors will be wondering if errant directors Freddie Shepherd and

On Thursday, retailer Next is expected to continue to show other retailers the way with a set of sparkling 1997 figures. NatWest, the stockbroker, expects profits of £182m, up from £156m in the previous year.

The March reporting season is still in full swing this week. Kicking off today is building materials group Carman, which is expected to report pre-tax profits of about £147.5m, down from £178m last year. Analysts will be watching closely for signs of a slowdown in the construction industry.

The company is also talking to Microsoft about launching an interactive service using the US giant's WebTV software. Far the record, losses are likely to come in at about £5.3m.

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Snub for Britain as euro wrangles overshadow York meeting

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

EUROPEAN finance ministers meeting in York at the weekend secured broad agreement about the need to reinforce Europe's single market, but this was overshadowed by sharp disagreement and jockeying for position over the start of the single currency.

In what looks like an embarrassing snub to Britain, it has been decided that the first meeting of the new Euro-X inner council of finance ministers from EMU member countries will take place before the end of Britain's presidency of the EU.

The meeting, which has been scheduled for mid-May under the chairmanship of Austria, is bound to heighten fears that non-EMU members will be excluded from key economic decisions. The Euro-X meeting is to discuss the operation of the stability pact, the arrangements for keeping government deficits on course under EMU.

Reports due on Wednesday from the European Commission and European Monetary Institute on which countries have met the criteria for membership of EMU could bring other problems for the UK.

There was sharp disagreement over the weekend on whether member countries need to spend a qualifying period in the exchange rate mechanism. There was also no sign of a break in the deadlock between France and Germany over who should head the European Central Bank.

Britain on Saturday firmly rejected calls to put the pound back into Europe's exchange rate mechanism ahead of any entry into a future single currency.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, said such a step was not needed. "Our position is clear. We have no intention of rejoining the ERM," he said.

Britain has opted out of joining the single currency at its launch in January 1999, but wants to join in the future if it is in the

best interests of the economy. The Maastricht Treaty, which sets out the convergence criteria for membership of the single currency, states that countries must have respected the ERM fluctuation bands for two years before qualifying.

Britain has argued that since the bands were widened dramatically in 1993, this condition is meaningless. It has said that instead, two years of currency stability should be enough.

Finance ministers from the rest of the European Union, with the exception of Sweden, reiterated that membership of the ERM is a non-negotiable obligation.

The issue over Britain's refusal to rejoin the ERM seems set to grow next week when the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, publishes a report on which countries meet the criteria for monetary union.

The report is likely to exclude Sweden from joining the single currency on the basis

that it has not been a member of the ERM for two years.

Greece, which wants to join EMU as soon as possible, long held a similar view on the exchange rate grid as Britain and Sweden, but last week changed tack and joined the ERM in order to qualify for EMU by 2001.

On Saturday, the French central bank governor Jean-Claude Trichet said he believed two years in the ERM was clearly spelled out in the Maastricht Treaty.

France, increasingly isolated in a row over the future head of the European Central Bank, vowed to stand firmly behind its candidate, Mr Trichet.

"France intends to defend the candidate it has proposed," Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn said.

Asked about France's isolation, Mr Strauss-Kahn quoted Winston Churchill. "When nine say no and one says yes, it is those who say yes who count."

Mr Strauss-Kahn said EU governments would try to reach a deal between now and a summit of EU leaders in May.

But if they failed, it would be up to the EU leaders to come up with a solution at their 1-3 May summit, when they will name the countries which qualify to join European monetary union at its launch in 1999.

The German Finance Minister, Theo Waigel said he believed an agreement had to be reached before the May summit. Failure to agree before that could force EU leaders into an unseemly scrap over the job just when they want to guarantee a smooth launch of the euro. Even worse, the row could just drag on to the end of June, when the ECB starts work.

Against the background of a small but noisy demonstration by anti-euro campaigners, involving light aeroplanes flying over York Minster and a chorus of *Land of Hope and Glory* outside the ministers' lunch on Saturday, the preoccupation with

EMU distracted attention from the formal agenda.

To the obvious delight of British officials, the European ministers agreed wholeheartedly with Treasury proposals for moving closer to a genuine single market in goods and capital. The meeting put a particular emphasis on financial services.

Mr Brown said: "The challenge in the next few years is to make ourselves more competitive and raise the sustainable level of growth".

He said the single currency could not be a success without a genuine single market, and held out the hope of big gains for European consumers.

A background paper from the Treasury highlighted big differences in costs and prices between the US and EU countries, with mobile phone calls, for example, between two-and-a-half and four times dearer in Europe. The UK has the most expensive mobile phone tariffs in Europe.

Shock as EMI boss gets £12m payoff

By our City staff

JIM FITFIELD, the head of EMI's music division, is this week set to receive the biggest golden goodbye in British corporate history when he collects up to £12m following a row with fellow directors.

News of the pay-off came as Barclays Bank prepared to tell shareholders of a £5m pay and compensation package for Bill Harrison, who quit as chief executive of Barclays' investment banking outfit after just 13 months in the job.

Details of these record executive compensation packages are bound to re-ignite the confrontation between shareholders and board members over excessive pay. Barclays is expected to tell shareholders of the £5m package for Mr Harrison in its annual report, due to be published on Wednesday.

Mr Fifield, who is known in the City as "Lucky Jim" for his sky-high rewards, was being groomed to take up the post of group chief executive of EMI,



Pay-off time: EMI's Jim Fifield (left) is set to collect £12m; the package for Barclays' Bill Harrison totalled £5m

a new position set up with him in mind, after 10 years at the helm of the music division.

However, non-executives last month opposed his appointment after Mr Fifield allegedly demanded total control of the business and a compensation package worth £10m a year. Mr Fifield's demands were rejected, and he has been expected to quit ever since.

Mr Fifield, who has worked for EMI since 1988, has collected more than £34m in the last five years. An American with three children who travels constantly, he previously worked for CBS/Fox and General Mills, the food group.

Much of his compensation is performance-related. EMI's profits are now 10 times their level when he arrived. In the last decade EMI has acquired Virgin Records and signed lucrative acts such as Blur and the Spice Girls.

EMI is expected to justify the package by pointing to savings which the company will enjoy when it closes Mr Fifield's New

York office, which costs more than £10m a year to run.

Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of EMI, who is believed to have had a strained relationship with "Lucky Jim" recently, has now scrapped the plan for a group chief executive, according to sources close to the company.

Instead, the position will be split between Ken Berry, head of EMI's record label business, and Martin Bandier, head of music publishing. Sir Colin will remain as executive chairman. Previously he was to have taken

a more back-seat role as non-executive chairman.

The Barclays annual report is expected to reveal that Bill Harrison received total pay for his brief spell at BZW of around £5m. He joined in September 1996 with a mandate to build the Barclays subsidiary into a global business but resigned in October last year after Barclays reversed its strategy.

Barclays' annual report is expected to show that Mr Harrison was paid salary and benefits of more than £1m in the nine

months between January and October last year. In 1996, he earned £2.85m in salary and bonuses. Part of his compensation package was designed to compensate him for bonuses forgone when he left Robert Fleming, where he was head of investment banking.

He is also known to have been given 133,000 share options which can be exercised at £9.07p each. With the share price standing at over £18, his options are likely to be worth more than £1m. He is also understood to

have earned a further £150,000 from another executive reward scheme in 1996. In total this adds up to £5m.

Nicknamed "Attila the Bruin" for his belligerent approach and West Midlands background, he was hired at least partly because of a reputation for driving companies ahead and motivating employees.

However, staff at BZW became concerned when Mr Harrison set about firing bankers and bringing in new staff from rival investment banks.

A rag trade to riches story as business is sold for £50m

By Andrew Verity

A NORTH London member of the rag trade who bought into an unpromising supplier of braids and trimmings for £10,000 in 1978, today finds himself £30m richer as he sells the company to Mercury Asset Management for more than £50m.

Peter Shalson is expected to realise over £30m after selling his majority stake in Brairtrim, an international supplier of packaging and accessories to the retail fashion industry.

When Mr Shalson bought into Brairtrim, the company had been going for 18 years as a supplier of braids and trimmings to the City fund manager.

yesterday bought an 80 per cent stake and injected fresh capital into the company for further expansion. The deal is worth well in excess of £50m.

Peter Shalson will hang on to a minority stake in the company that made him rich but plans to take a back seat as a non-executive director. He said: "I think what I'll do now is take it easy for a few months – in between partying."

Deciding to relinquish control of the business was not easy, but the directors and I felt that Mercury they were the best people to take the business forward in the interests of the employees, customers and suppliers."

In many cases, the appeals have been necessary because of Revenue blunders. The Revenue has admitted that hundreds of thousands of tax demands were so inaccurate

that they showed debts as credit and vice versa.

According to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, taxpayers are still being pursued by inspectors who do not appear to have been informed that assessments are under appeal.

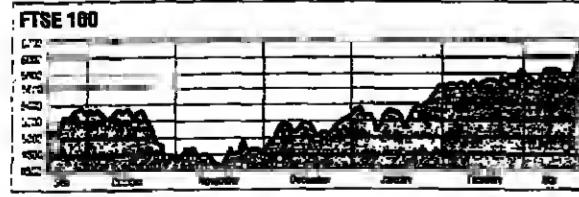
Accountants say Revenue inspectors are pursuing taxpayers for debts even though other officials are being prevailed upon to consider an appeal against these assessments.

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that they showed debts as credit and vice versa.

A week in the markets

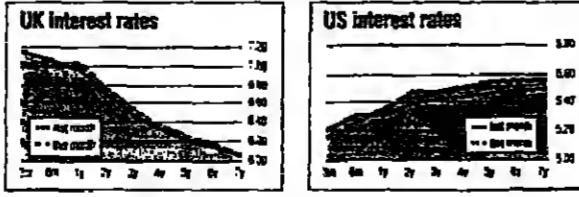
STOCK MARKETS



Indices	Close	Wk's chg	52 wk high	52 wk low	Year (%)
FTSE 100	1408.10	-17.40	1409.1	1389.1	3.33%
FTSE 250	3516.00	-158.40	3547.2	3459.2	2.95%
FTSE 350	2860.80	-63.30	2972.3	2675.7	3.45%
FTSE All Share	2768.02	-79.95	2797.23	2697.07	3.41%
FTSE SmallCap	2607.90	-53.00	2650.4	2562.1	2.70%
FTSE Housing	1408.10	-19.40	1409.1	1389.1	2.95%
FTSE AIM	1050.50	-19.00	1111.2	989.9	1.87%
Dow Jones	8868.43	-303.91	8890.05	8564.78	1.57%
Nikkei	16500.47	-229.57	16510.76	14488.21	0.90%
Hang Seng	15642.23	-307.20	16520.31	15098.13	3.33%
S&P 500	5001.55	-111.90	5249.05	4943.66	1.57%

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INTEREST RATES

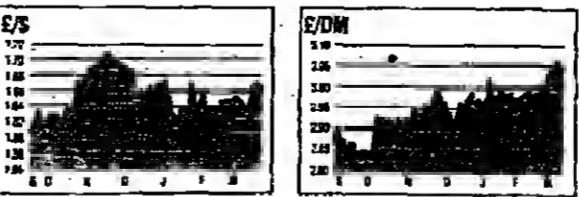


MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price Up	Wk's chg	% chg	Falls	Price Up	Wk's chg	% chg
Kwifit	532.50	117.00	29.16	Wotsley	421.00	-106.00	-24.42
S.James Place	285.00	61.50	27.35	London Clubs	222.00	-49.00	-17.75
Savoy Hotel	1750.00	350.00	22.81	Blacombeables	154.00	-30.50	-16.55
Barons	151.50	27.00	21.65	Woolard	303.00	-57.00	-18.57

source: Bloomberg

CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Wk's chg	Yr Ago
Bank of England	12.73	-0.87	15.46
EDP	114.10	-2.80	110.88
D-Mark	1.8810	+1.1601	1.8504
EDF	180.30	-3.40	155.03
Dollar	107.40	+0	



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DEFINING
MOMENT
FOR BLAIR'S
FIRST TERM

So this is what New Labour is really all about

THOSE commentators who claimed last July that the Chancellor should have tightened fiscal policy more markedly in his first Budget should now be eating their words. The underlying fiscal stance tightened by over 2 per cent of gross domestic product in 1997/98, the sharpest budgetary tightening since the famous Howe Budget in 1981. Of course, they are still complaining, but what more do the fiscal hairshirts want? Even the IMF would not ask for such draconian action from an emerging nation facing economic ruin. And Britain is certainly not that.

But the debate on the fiscal stance is really missing the point of Gordon Brown's first full Budget. Like it or loathe it, this Budget will be the defining moment for Mr Blair's first term. At long last, there is some meat on the New Labour bones. In fact, the Chancellor's economic strategy, as spelled out in the Red Book, "New Ambitions for Britain", is certainly the most ambitious, and probably the most coherent, statement of a government's overall economic objectives since the heyday of monetarism in the early and mid-1980s.

In those days, Nigel Lawson and Terry Burns combined to provide for the Thatcher government a plan of action that was based on a clear and consistent set of economic principles. Not all of them proved valid, but at least they enabled the government to unite, not only around a series of ends, but also around the means to those ends.

It was never quite the same in the remaining Chancellors of the Tory era. John Major was more interested in the minutiae of politics than anything else. Norman Lamont was clearly capable of devising a coherent economic plan, but it did not happen to include membership of the exchange rate mechanism, so that was beside the point. Ken Clarke was an excellent Chancellor (at least until he succumbed to electoral temptation in 1996), but he would have considered it an insult to be told that his actions were inspired by anything more than bluff common sense. Economics, as such, was simply never his cup of tea.

It is clear, in contrast, that the contents of the 1998 Red Book have been substantially driven by a Chancellor who, for good or ill, does care about economics. The unifying objective is stated baldly and frequently: to raise the UK's underlying rate of growth in GDP. The Treasury accepts that this is a very ambitious objective. Indeed, they point out that Britain's long-term growth rate has remained stubbornly fixed at around 2.2 per cent per annum ever since the mid-nineteenth century. Despite a temporary dip in the 1950s and 1960s, the average growth rate since the war has been no higher than in the previous hundred years.

With other comparable countries generally doing better than Britain, this has left us trailing Europe and the United States in terms of productivity and living standards. Gordon Brown clearly finds this an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and al-

most all of his major policy initiatives are designed eventually to close the gap between British living standards and those of our main competitors.

This is why he has established a new framework for macro-economic management which seeks to prevent sudden jolts in either monetary or fiscal policy causing unnecessary volatility in the economic cycle. The thesis here is that it is no fluke that the economic cycle has coincided with the electoral cycle—the temptation to use economic policy instruments to stoke election bonds has simply proven too great for mortal politicians to resist.

The resulting booms and busts have lowered the propensity of the private sector to invest and have weakened the labour market. Hence the decision to delegate monetary policy to the Bank of England, subject to an inflation objective set by the government. And hence the more recent decision to legislate a Fiscal Code which will increase the transparency and accountability of future Chancellor's budgetary decisions.

Critics have suggested that this new straitjacket removes too many degrees of freedom from economic policy makers. But this need not be the case. There has been nothing to explain the Bank's puzzling failure to pursue a firm domestic monetary stance since the election except its own internal machinations. It was highly amusing last week to read in the press that the Treasury was emphasising the tightness of its fiscal measure in

order to dissuade the Bank from raising base rates. Nothing could possibly be further from the truth.)

Nor is there anything in the new Fiscal Code to prevent the Chancellor from implementing a counter-cyclical budgetary policy stance if he so chooses. As it happens, Mr Brown tends to believe that fiscal policy is necessarily rather heavy-footed, and is mainly suited to providing a back-drop of medium-term stability, but this has not prevented him from weighing in with a healthy dose of budgetary stringency in the past 12 months. Fiscal fine tuning was not the main intention here—indeed, the failure of such a massive dose of budgetary tightening to slow domestic demand in the past year should be a salutary lesson to staunch believers in fine tuning—but it was a useful by-product as the medium-term fiscal problem was being corrected.

The new macro-economic straitjacket is not the only, or even the main, element in the Treasury's new approach. In addition, there are at least three other major areas where direct action has been targeted under the Brown strategy. First, reform of the labour market—Welfare to Work, and now the concerted effort to "make work pay" at the bottom end of the income scale—is intended to reduce structural unemployment, and thus increase economic growth as the jobless total falls to its new sustainable level.

Second, cuts in corporation and business taxation are intended to boost the

level of business investment in the UK. As the Treasury clearly spells out, the present levels of capital investment are insufficient to support even the current rate of GDP growth, let alone anything higher. (So much, incidentally, for those rather odd souls who still contend that capital spending and economic growth are unconnected.)

Third, and most ambitious of all, the Red Book states quite specifically that "growing inequality not only has serious short-term social consequences, but it weakens the long-term potential of the economy." The government is therefore "determined to create a fairer, more equal society"—the first time, to my knowledge, that the Red Book has enshrined a target to reduce inequality alongside the usual inflation and PSBR objectives. This is a departure of considerable importance, and one which should not be overlooked by those who claim that New Labour's economic strategy is nothing more than a rehash of old Tory objectives in the hands of a new breed of spin doctors.

A stable macro framework, lower structural unemployment, higher business investment, and a more equal society—lofty ambitions indeed. The 1998 Budget is but a step towards these ambitions, albeit clearly a step in the right direction. Like the first Thatcher Budget of 1980, 1998 will be remembered not only as a road map for a new government, but as a yardstick against which its future efforts will come to be measured.

Chiroscience considers £100m float of chemistry division

By our City staff

CHIROSCIENCE Group is looking to sell its ChiroTech chemistry division in a move analysts said could generate at least £80m, person familiar with the proposed sale said at the weekend.

Chiroscience, one of Britain's burgeoning group of biotechnology companies, has already received strong interest from several potential buyers after putting ChiroTech on the market in recent weeks, the person said. This profitable offshoot made up about 64 per cent of Chiroscience's revenue in the first half of 1997.

The sale would be the second major sell-off in the growing UK biotech sector. Celltech last year sold its "biologics" contract drug-making unit to Alusuisse-Lonza Holdings AG for £42m, a price that may rise to over £50m, depending on future profits.

"I think it would be a very good move," said Nick Woolf, analyst with BA Robertson Stephens & Co. "ChiroTech operates independently and is profitable, and is a very different business from what they are trying to achieve [in drug development]."

For Celltech, the biologics sale allowed it to stave off asking investors for more funding. It also allowed it to concentrate on its potentially more lucrative drug development business.

Chiroscience hopes to do the same. The Cambridge-based company, which was founded by UK biotech entrepreneur Chris Evans, will use the proceeds to offset its "cash burn," or spending rate, of about £2m a month, lessening its need for additional

fund-raising. Chiroscience raised £40m from a rights issue in 1996.

Rebecca Iveson, a Chiroscience spokeswoman, would only confirm that the company was "looking at ways of realising shareholder value" from ChiroTech.

She said "discussions are ongoing" and that options might include "selling it or floating it" but declined to discuss progress.

Bill Blair, analyst with Robert Fleming, said ChiroTech could be worth as much as £100m, if rated in the same way as Oxford Asymmetry, which floated this month. That company now has a market value of £188m.

"This must be a very good time to sell," said Mr Blair. "Chiroscience needs to raise money in the next two years and anything they can do to avoid a rights issue is good news."

Bertelsmann set to reveal media alliance

'Dual economy' plea for aid to industry

By Michael Harrison

THE GOVERNMENT came under fresh pressure yesterday to aid the manufacturing sector after the publication of a new report showing the extent to which Britain has turned into a dual economy.

Media reports at the weekend speculated that the announcement could involve the takeover of Random House, the largest US publisher, or the creation of a publishing joint venture with Havas, the French media group.

Bertelsmann's chairman, Mark Woessner, is inviting journalists to a news conference in Munich this afternoon to unveil "an important strategic corporate undertaking", said Manfred Harnischfeger, head of Bertelsmann public relations.

But Mr Harnischfeger, saying the negotiations were still under way yesterday, declined to elaborate. "We won't say anything before the news conference," he said.

The weekly news magazine, *Focus*, reported that Bertelsmann was expected to take over Random House. A part of Advanced Media, its best-selling authors include Michael Crichton, Norman Mailer and Pope John Paul II.

Such a move would be a continuation of Bertelsmann's strategy to become a leading player in the fiercely competitive US publishing market and strengthen its international book publishing and book club activities.

But a report in the French newspaper *Le Figaro* steered speculation at the weekend in a different direction. It said the French publishing group Havas and Bertelsmann were negotiating plans to create a joint venture grouping their trade publications. The two companies are already partners in a book club. They are also shareholders in the European broadcasting group CLT-UFA.

overall output by half a per cent even though manufacturing only accounts for a fifth of economic activity.

Had manufacturing grown at the same rate as the rest of the economy then growth between 1990 and 1997 would have been 17.4 per cent, not the 13.2 per cent actually achieved, while the unemployment rate would now stand at 3.2 per cent rather than 5.6 per cent.

The figures highlight the development of a dual economy in the UK with manufacturing on the brink of recession and a booming service sector which has been fuelled by strong demand," says the report.

Ms Croot said this meant that the Government should not just rely on the control of interest rates by the Bank of England to manage the economy as a whole but must make more use of fiscal policy.

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IP/IT Hants To £50,000 Exciting prospect for 2-5yrPQE, commercially aware IP/IT specialist. Leading provincial practice with extremely progressive outlook and quality caseload. Drive and personality required to make their IP/IT development plans. Genuine opportunity, for the right candidate, to make real impact. Contact Paul Carnegie.

IP LITIGATION S. East To £38,000 Niche Intellectual Property firm has created a role for NQ/junior assistant to 4-5yrs PQE to assist on substantial IP Litigation for major international clients. Opportunity to be involved in contracts drafting. Extremely comfortable office environment and state of the art support. Contact Paul Carnegie.

CORP/COMM Hants To £50,000 Experienced corporate and commercial lawyer required for leading national practice. This is a newly created position due to the level of work being generated by the southern corporate team. A quality and diverse caseload. Clients include a mixture of large to medium plc's and larger owned managed businesses. Good academic and City experience preferred. Contact Simon Scott.

EMPLOYMENT LAW Surrey To £38,000 Senior role offering plenty of scope for career progression, possibly to run your own unit, is available within pre-eminent Provincial practice. Handling the full range of contentious and non-contentious matters, both respondent and applicant led, you must enjoy marketing and practice development. Contact Paul Carnegie.

BANKING LITIGATION S. West To £32,000 Well regarded commercial practice seeks 2-4 year qualified banking litigator to bolster its existing team which undertakes a wide range of work on behalf of a major clearing bank. Contact Simon Scott.

MATRIMONIAL Exeter To £30,000 Excellent opportunity for an experienced matrimonial solicitor seeking to progress their career to encompass supervisory and managerial responsibilities within this respected practice. Contact Simon Scott.

PLANNING Exeter To £60,000 Leading commercial practice seeks accomplished planning lawyer (up to partner level) to head up its planning and environmental work on behalf of a national and regional client base. Contact Simon Scott.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT Exeter To £60,000 Leading commercial practice seeks senior local government/public sector lawyer (up to Partner level) to head up its Local Government Unit. Contact Simon Scott.

COMM. LITIGATION Avon To £30,000 Small successful commercial practice seeks commercial litigator with 2-6 years' PQE to deal with company/banking/partnership disputes. Contact Simon Scott.

PERSONAL INJURY Oxford To £40,000 Highly regarded defendant personal injury practice seeks a 2-5 year qualified practitioner with strong defendant insurance experience as part of its continued expansion. Excellent prospects. Contact Simon Scott.

CONSTRUCTION Exeter To £40,000 This role will involve contentious and non-contentious work on behalf of contractors and non-contractors with clients ranging from plc's to large property companies and public sector bodies. Contact Simon Scott.

COMM. LITIGATION South Coast To £45,000 Highly respected firm seeks a senior heavyweight litigator to join this busy department. Wide variety of work with particular emphasis on construction and IP matters. Excellent partnership prospects. Contact Sophie Mallin.

FAMILY W. Midlands To £30,000 Family lawyer required 1 years PQE and upwards. To handle all aspects of family work in particular high quality Ancillary Relief matters. Forward thinking progressive firm, great location. Contact Sophie Mallin.

PERSONAL INJURY Devon To £30,000 Leading personal injury practice requires a Plaintiff personal injury solicitor/legal executive up to 4 yrs PQE. Must be able to develop and handle own caseload. Rewarding work with excellent prospects. Contact Sophie Mallin.

TAX AND TRUSTS Bristol To £50,000 Leading national commercial and tax law firm with a growing reputation for its international work is looking to recruit a senior solicitor. The department services a strong base of high-net-worth clients and undertakes trust management, tax compliance and probate work. Contact Sophie Mallin.

COMM. PROPERTY Bristol To £29,500 Top tier city firm is looking for 2 bright and enthusiastic solicitors, newly qualified to 2 years PQE. General commercial roles specialising in landlord and tenant and retail and corporate support. Excellent opportunities. Contact Sophie Mallin.

NON CONTENTIOUS Oxfordshire To £30,000 Expanding provincial firm requires a newly qualified and upwardly mobile solicitor to handle a general caseload from a range of quality clients. Opportunity to develop commercial caseload. Friendly environment in an excellent location. Contact Sophie Mallin.

COMPANY/COMM. PROP Bath To £40,000 Large reputable firm requires a senior lawyer for their Business and Commercial Property Units. Covering a broad spectrum of commercial work. Clients include charities and education and commercial property specialists. Good marketing skills and sense of humour essential. Contact Sophie Mallin.

PLAINTIFF PI Central Essex To £Competitive Progressive commercial practice seeks solicitor Ideally 2-4 years PQE to undertake interesting caseload. Some medical negligence. Good future prospects. Please call Richard Morgan.

PROF INDEMNITY Norfolk To £City Rates A superb opportunity for a high calibre solicitor ideally up to 6 years PQE to specialise in this demanding area of work. Prospective role with genuine partnership prospects. Please call Richard Morgan.

MATRIMONIAL/CIVIL N.E London To £28,000 Experienced litigation solicitor is required by this busy practice. The workload has a matrimonial bias combined with general civil litigation including landlord and tenant matters. Please call Richard Morgan.

COMM. LITIGATION Norfolk Attractive Commercial progressive practice seeks impressive newly qualified solicitor to undertake insolvency related litigation. Strong department. Please call Richard Morgan.

COMM. PROPERTY Norfolk To £55,000 Opportunity to join this leading East Anglian practice who are seeking a high calibre property solicitor to join their respected property team. Appointee is likely to come from a recognised City/Regional firm. Varied high quality workload. This is a senior appointment with good prospects. Please call Richard Morgan.

IP/IT Cambs Impressive Superb opportunity exists within this prestigious practice for a solicitor 2-5 years PQE to deal with non contentious work. Biotechnological background an advantage. Strong academic credentials and recognised City/Regional experience required. Please call Richard Morgan.

PUBLIC CLIENT Lincoln To £26,000 Well established practice seeks an experienced legal executive or individual with relevant accountancy/revenue experience to undertake interesting mix of wills, trust and tax work. Please call Richard Morgan.

COMMERCIAL Bath To £55,000 Leading Bath practice seeks a solicitor (min 2-4 years) to join its expanding Commercial Department. With an excellent Commercial client base, this is an excellent opportunity for a skilled technician. Contact Bridget Lavin.

COMM. LITIGATION W. Country To £30,000 Respected regional practice seeks a solicitor to take over and develop a quality caseload. Drawing from a strong Commercial client base this is an excellent opportunity with prospects for progression. (min 3-6 years). Contact Bridget Lavin.

RES. PROPERTY W. Cornwall To £24,000 Established South West practice requires a Solicitor/Legal Executive to join a busy branch office taking over an existing volume caseload. With a strong private client base and scope for development this position has real potential. Contact Bridget Lavin.

PERSONAL INJURY Somerset To £26,000 Niche Plaintiff firm seeks a talented litigator for a full caseload of personal injury and medical negligence work. Soit a solicitor with 2-4 years heavyweight experience gained with a leading firm. Contact Bridget Lavin.

TAX TRUSTS Bristol To £45,000 Senior solicitor sought by Leading Commercial practice for a quality caseload acting for both Corporate entities and private individuals. Partnership prospects. Contact Bridget Lavin.

COMM. PARTNER Cornwall To £50,000 Our client a leading Cornish practice seeks a dynamic individual to steer its Commercial Department into the Millennium. Contact Bridget Lavin.

PFI Bristol To £40,000 Leading practice seeks a skilled technician with a sparky personality to join its respected team working on high profile projects for Public Sector clientele. (min 2-3 yrs). Contact Bridget Lavin.



Legal Opportunities

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مكتب للعمل

More work and no pay

Charity isn't a dirty word and lawyers can gain by waiving their fees, says Grania Langdon-Down

OFFERING legal help for free should be seen by lawyers as a professional obligation and not as some "idiosyncratic expression of charitable goodwill", according to a rallying cry from the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham of Cornhill.

He has given his enthusiastic support to the Solicitors' Pro Bono Group (SPBG) as it prepares to launch a membership drive next month among the 10,000 law firms in England and Wales.

Lord Bingham said solicitors across the country had always carried out work *pro bono publico* – for the public good – but it tended to be done piecemeal and *ad hoc*, depending on the charitable instincts of the individual or firm.

In the SPBG's first newsletter, he says: "Firms have been slow to publicise their pro bono work, perhaps for fear of encouraging competition, perhaps out of consideration for their clients who do pay full fees. Much valuable pro bono work has been born to blush unseen."

"In this, as in other ways, we have lagged behind some other jurisdictions. In the United States, particularly, but also in some parts of the Commonwealth, such as New South Wales, the performance of a measure of unpaid work has come to be accepted, not as an idiosyncratic expression of charitable goodwill but as firm professional obligation, a duty accepted by those who enjoy the great privilege of practising law."

"No practising lawyer is unaware of the centuries-old taunt that the only professional concern of lawyers is their professional remuneration. There can be no more effective riposte than a willingness to work, part of the time, for nothing."

Certainly, the taunts of politicians about "fat-cat lawyers" stung the many solicitors who do pro bono work – estimated by a Law Society survey to be worth about £140m a year.

For Peta Sweet, SPBG's director, the difficulty with promoting pro bono work is that "lawyers automatically see problems rather than potential. You can find a lot of cynicism and lots of politics – if we highlight things that are being done, firms can be accused of self-promotion. So we try to sell the message that it is not just giving something for free. There is something they can get out of it, too – both for themselves



More and more lawyers are wanting to give something back to society and gain valuable expertise at the same time

Photograph: Brian Harris

as individuals and for the community they serve."

A former employment lawyer, Sweet remembered taking on cases for clients whose money or legal aid ran out. "If you have a grain of humanity, you cannot just turn them away when their funds run out. This is why so many small firms do pro bono work because that is their client base."

"But some parts of the profession have lost that tradition as firms have become larger and more commercially based. What we need to see is that pro bono work offers their lawyers broader experiences, which can only help in recruitment and training."

She hopes the SPBG's first conference, on 6 June in London, will provide a forum for exchanging information and experiences and exploring new ways of offering free legal services.

Last year, City firm Lovell White Duran, which provides free legal services in Commonwealth/Caribbean "death row" cases, appointed solicitor Yasmin Waljee as its first full-time pro bono officer. She receives about 10 or 15 calls a week from a wide range of community groups, charities and individuals, who she then matches with one of the many volunteers from within the firm.

Waljee explains her role in Legal Network Television's 500th programme, *Training and Development Today*, which focuses on the increasingly important place pro bono work has in professional practice and development.

She tells the programme: "The stimulus has come from the young solicitors within the firm who are particularly keen to put something back into the community and want to see a difference being made to individuals' lives. As a result, this has brought about a pro bono culture and a more positive environment within the firm."

For Tony Willis, partner in the City firm Clifford Chance and chair of the SPBG, the

right route in promoting the better management of pro bono work.

"It is not a case of us prancing round the regions telling them what to do," he said. "We have more to learn from them than vice versa and if we don't get that right then we will engender some hostility. Smaller firms already tend to do the most pro bono work and the big commercial practices have a lot to learn from them."

Turning to legal education, he added: "It has always distressed me that solicitors, when they are training, do not necessarily come through with a feeling that they have an obligation to help the community."

Professor Nigel Savage, chief executive of the College of Law, echoed this concern. "Ideas of civic responsibilities and public duties disappeared under the drive to make lots of Arthur Daley lawyers out to make money for their firms," he said.

However, there is also a concern that the Government would merely use pro bono work as an excuse to cut legal aid. Rosaleen Kilbane, partner in the Birmingham legal aid practice McGrath & Co, said: "There is the argument that as long as solicitors are prepared to do this work for nothing there will be no need to arrange payment for it, particularly in the field of benefits tribunals."

"But are we supposed to sacrifice the goodwill of our clients in the hope that funding will be made available? In the current climate, there is likely to be less and less funding available."

Legal Network Television, 2 Breams Buildings, London EC4A 1DP (0171 611 7400); Solicitors Pro Bono Group, 15 St Swithin's Lane, London EC4N 8AL (0171 929 5601)

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CONSTRUCTION Hong Kong To £1Ex pat

The good times are still rolling in Hong Kong, where construction lawyers with 2-3 or 4-5 years' post in contentious or non-contentious work will enjoy a vibrant mix of high quality work and fantastic times outside the office. There are several enticing fringe benefits, including free use of the firm junk. Ref: D44865

TAX To £75,000

If you joined a major City firm with a market-leading IT practice as its only tax assistant with any experience, you would have every right to expect both very varied work and really good prospects. That is exactly what you will get here if you can show 3+ years' post. Might also look at go-ahead partners. Ref: D50688

CORPORATE To £55,000

This leading City firm represents the way of the future. It gives assistants responsibility and rewards them exceptionally well for doing a good job, handing out promotion on the basis of ability, not time served. If you are an ambitious 1-3 years' qualified corporate lawyer, this is a great first move. Ref: D26727

TRADE MARK ASSISTANT To £50,000

You could barely do better than the trade mark and patent group of this leading City law firm, which is ranked as one of the best in the country with clients to match. The way is only up for an assistant who joins its in-house, full service trade mark and patent agency, which also carries out related legal work. Ref: D38274

INSOLVENCY LITIGATION To £55,000 senior equity

If you are looking for a leading practice where you could spend the rest of your career, then this top 20 City firm could fit the bill. It continues to grow in all areas of its practice, which is reflected in some very impressive draws for partners. A heavyweight insolvency litigator will benefit straight away. Ref: D48857

ENVIRONMENTAL/PLANNING To £Equity

This top 20 City firm recognises the importance of environmental work and has the important and high-profile clients required to build a practice rapidly and propel lawyers with 0-3 years' post or more senior lawyers, including partners, to prominence. There are real benefits from getting in at the start. Ref: D28068

FILM PRODUCTION/FINANCE To £65,000

This leading medium-sized City firm has some of the biggest clients in the business, including top broadcasters and Hollywood agencies, and now needs a 3-4 years' qualified firm finance lawyer for its market-leading team. This is an outstanding opportunity. Ref: D47343

EMPLOYMENT To £40,000

This well-known south London firm has a high quality employment team instructed by several major trade union clients to act for them and their members. This is an interesting position that should attract any 3+ years' qualified employment litigator keen on enjoying life out of the office too. Ref: D28377

MEDICAL LITIGATION To £45,000

As the market-leader in defendant medical litigation work, this well-known medium-sized City firm offers a very sound career to lawyers with 0-2 years' post, although relevant experience is not vital. This is a firm committed to helping young lawyers develop their skills and reap the rewards of their work. Ref: D18792

CORPORATE To £75,000

Arguably the fastest growing law firm in the City offers similarly rapid promotion to corporate lawyers with 5 years' post from another leading City firm. It has a client base that many larger firms would be jealous of and almost unlimited potential. Join in, buckle up, and enjoy the very well-paid ride. Ref: D38435

SHIPPING To £45,000

It will be full steam ahead for the career of the young shipping lawyer with 0-2 years' post who joins the London office of this leading national firm. Working in a small team which rewards good performance, you will work on a mix of wet and dry matters. Cantonese speakers are especially welcome. Ref: D15857

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Art gives shape to phantom limbs



This woman lost her hand in a car accident, but can still feel it and her engagement ring. Photograph: John Voss



The artist Alexa Wright with one her doctored pictures showing a man with the hand he feels but cannot see

Clare Garner on how an artist is tackling one of medicine's most puzzling phenomena.

ON the left is a woman who can open and close her hand, which helps to ease the pain. When the pain increases, the hand seems to get larger. The man pictured above can control the movements of the hand until suddenly he realises it isn't there.

Which is the true body: that which is outwardly visible or that which is experienced? This is the question posed by the artist Alexa Wright in her portraits of amputees.

Ms Wright has been fascinated by the relationship between "this thing we call self" and the material body. "After Image", a collection of digitally manipulated photographs which visualise the subjective experience of amputee's phantom limbs, is the culmination of her work.

"My recent work with amputees uses the genre of por-

traiture to expand upon my previous investigations of the relationship between body and soul," she said. "For the first time in my work 'the body' is that of a specific individual, whose subjective reality is represented within the context of their daily lives. The authenticity of the photographic image is questioned in this work, as is the authenticity of body image."

In these photographs, Ms Wright addresses the vexing fact that while the people in the images regard the phantom as part of themselves - because they can feel it - everyone else believes that the person's being stops at their stump.

Phantom limb - the experience of persisting sensory perceptions after limb amputation - remains one of the best known yet most puzzling medical phenomena and is experienced by

70 to 100 per cent of amputees. The man photographed with his phantom hand on the table was injured in a car accident in which his arm was crushed. X-rays showed his arm was severely damaged, but the hand was left in tact. His hand is still painful, mostly in the third finger. It also itches much of the time and wants to scratch it.

He said: "I can't imagine being without the phantom because it is there all the time and it is very like eating or breathing: I can put up with it quite adequately and would probably miss it if it went away. I might wish it wasn't so irritating, but I think I would rather keep it as it is than risk losing it."

The woman with her large phantom hand was also involved in a road accident in which she lost her hand. She describes her phantom: "When the pain increases it seems to be larger; it is definitely heavier than a normal limb. I can open and close my hand, and this helps to ease the pain ... I am not aware of the wrist at all, but I can move the fingers."

In the accident she was aware that her engagement ring cut into her finger and, she says, the ring is still there.

"At first I used to get quite uptight that I must be crazy because I was imagining a hand; but it is so definite that nobody can convince me that it is just in my mind. I wasn't born like this and obviously I do miss my arm, yet sometimes the phantom pain makes me feel whole again."

"After Image", sponsored by Wellcome Trust, will be at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, High Street, Oxford, from 20 April to 8 May.

All prices shown are inclusive of VAT, are in pence per minute, and have been rounded to the nearest penny. Comparisons made between BT and PRIMUS Pre-Paid standard daytime rates. Rates apply to calls made until 30/4/98. Offer is for new PRIMUS customers who join between 1/3/98 and 31/3/98. Calls from payphones and mobile phones may subject to a surcharge.

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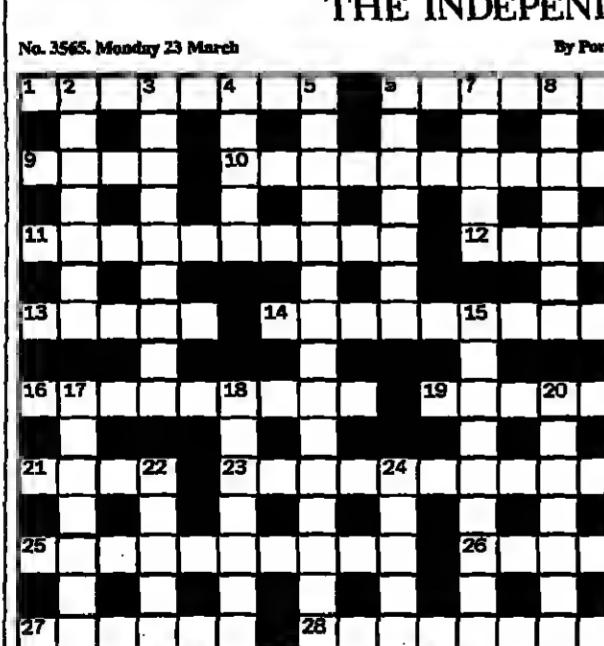
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1 Too much trouble to help soldiers (8)
6 Points out normal energy is widely dispersed (6)
9 Obligation to join royal bank (4)
10 I use the lot to produce profile (10)
11 File of money taken out of real business (5,5)
12 Fear of English river

CROSS
1 crew (4)
13 Head off opening move to an extent (5)
14 Sculpture that's not outstanding? (3,6)
16 Overweight American girl serves cocktail (9)
19 Light suit (5)
21 Mark's panic doesn't come to an end (4)
23 Use hammer to hack round cold pipe (10)

25 Role for a strolling player? (4-2-4)
26 Depose head of state in public (4)
27 Issue direction, only it's without force (6)
28 Wind and a steady rain initially developed (8)

DOWN
2 Allow one to enter border region in Ireland (7)
3 Gullible about Henry who's very ambitious (9)
4 Start working hard (5)
5 Somehow feel Katie's coach should get a share of the benefits (1,5,2,3,4)
6 Quarter of Poles are sorry about coming back (7)
7 Prevent Rex getting in a pass (5)

8 A tenor is absorbed by French composer's stuff (7)

15 Trainee's certain to get out of pledge - it's despicable (9)
17 Welcome a challenge, by the sound of it (7)
18 Love short piece of music (7)
20 Note flyer's accepting new advice (7)
22 About to catch fine river fish (5)
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